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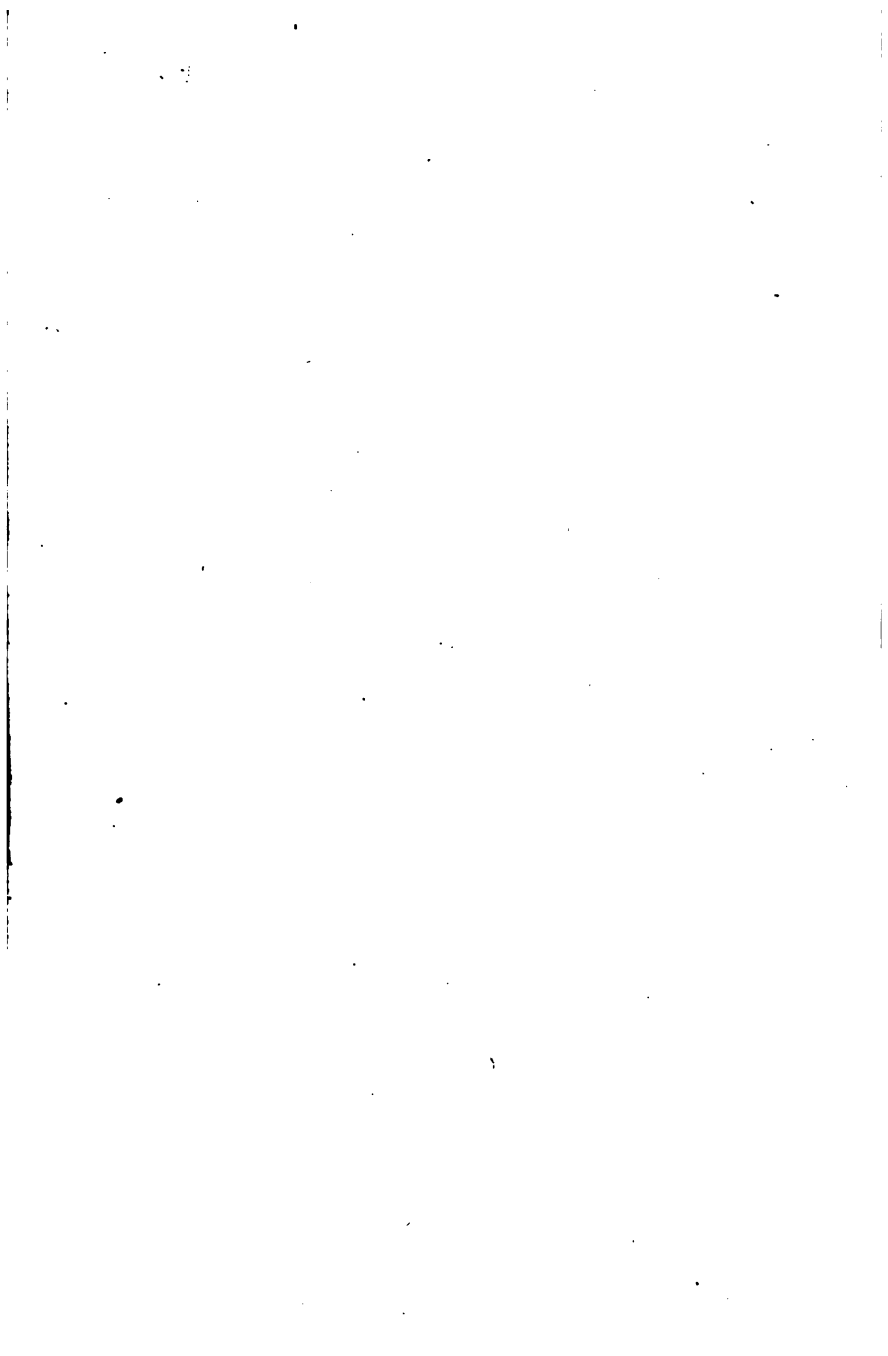


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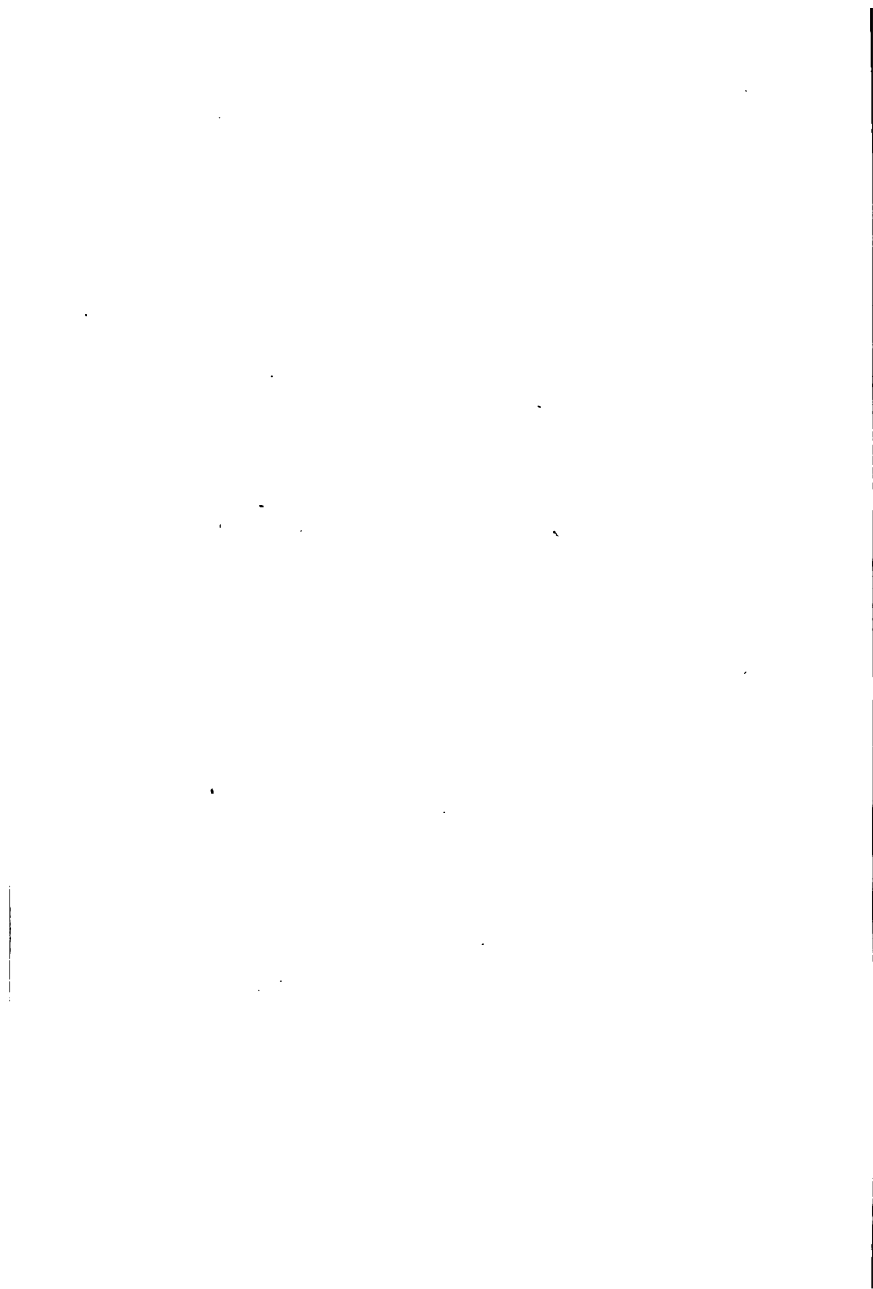
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THE DAYRELLS.



THE DAYRELLS.

A Domestic Story.

BY THE

VISCOUNTESS ENFIELD.

Byng. (Alia Harriet Frederica)

"This is to use the grief that God has sent,
To read the lesson and to learn the love,
To sound the depths of saddest chastisement,
To pluck on earth the fruit of realms above."
Rev. Horatius Bonar, D.D.



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Dedicated

To the Rebered and Beloved

Memory of

My Father.

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THE DAYRELLS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY.

THEY were no relations whatever to Guy Darrell, the famous hero of ‘What will he do with it?’ Let that be clearly understood. I believe, indeed, that the name is spelt differently, but of that I am not quite sure. They were more likely—my Dayrells, I mean—to be descended from the ‘Wild Dayrell’ who gave his name to a gallant steed not so very long ago, and whose principal feat, it seems, was murdering a new-born babe.

In spite of this dubious ancestry, *my* Dayrells

were a gentle and a kindly race—not faultless, but lovable even in their very errors—interesting from their homely sorrows ; and it is of them that these pages are about to tell.

The head of the Dayrells of the border land lying between two of the southern counties of England was John Reginald, Earl of Kendal, a spare handsome man of about fifty or upwards when my narrative begins. This second name, I must observe, was so much a matter of course in the Dayrell family that it could hardly be accounted a proper name, even as the same appellation is appropriated by the Courtenays, Arthur by all the Annesleys male and female, or Anthony by the Ashley-Coopers. This Earl of Kendal had no son, and his family did, indeed, consist of an only daughter, whose mother had died soon after her birth, and who was to him the very apple of his eye and the core of his heart. His two brothers, Reginald Charles and Reginald Arthur, were twins, but Charles had died in the

prime of manhood, leaving a widow and one young son, who was now about twenty, and was of course the presumptive heir to the earldom of Kendal. Arthur Dayrell was in the Church : he was married, and had, at the present speaking, three sons and one daughter.

It will be well if this succinct statement can be borne in mind by the attentive reader ; or shall we steal a leaf from an imaginary peerage, and, after the example of ‘ Dynevor Terrace,’ state the Dayrell pedigree in full ? I think not. Conversation elucidates many things in real life. Let us see whether we cannot by degrees introduce our personages and plunge into our story through this convenient medium.

Scene—A broad gravel walk under the windows of the prettiest, most old-fashioned, creeper-covered, lattice-windowed, comfortable-looking house that can be imagined. A moderate-sized garden, brilliant with flowers set in emerald turf ; farther on a grassy lawn shaded by trees and

sloping towards a clear river; beyond, meadows lately fragrant with hay intervene between Derley Moor Rectory, the house we have just mentioned, and Dayrell Court, whose tall quaint chimneys are seen through the foliage. Preparations for a mild festivity may be seen on the rectory lawn—tables spread with snowy cloths and the groundwork of a magnificent tea.

Dramatis Personæ—Three individuals: two youths about twenty years of age, and a maiden about eighteen. They are pacing the gravel walk slowly, and talking the while.

‘We hardly expected you, Charley,’ said the maiden, with a slightly mischievous glance at him from her beautiful dark eyes.

‘I wanted to hear all the parish news, my dear cousin, and could not wait till to-morrow; so I thought I would run down here before the Philistines arrive. Don’t you find this sort of thing a great bore?’

‘What sort of thing? walking up and down

this gravel walk with you? Yes, it is rather tiresome, I think.'

The eldest of the party, who was too like the last speaker not to be her brother, laughed.

'Civil!' said young Charley Dayrell, casting up his eyes, 'after I came here in the sun on purpose to see you! I mean, isn't it a bore having all these people to tea?'

'You are not like Mrs. Hughes, who asked me the other day in her mincing voice, when all the school children were suffocating with stuffing the hugest buns at the school feast, "Do you *enjoy* a little scene of this kind, Miss Dayrell?"' as if I had never assisted (very literally too) at a school tea before.'

'You ought to think it a touching sight, Gerty,' said her brother Sebastian.

'I don't mind the people who are coming to-day, much: they are rather tiresome, perhaps, some of them; but it is such a treat to the children coming here, and I think their parents like

it better than an ordinary dinner. Of course it would not do if it was not really hot summer weather. But it is Reginald's party really, only the children could not come alone, so we have parents and children together, and entertain them all as well as we can. Seb is very good at helping, always;' and she looked affectionately at her pet brother.

'I'll help,' said Charley, with a droll touch of jealousy in his manner: he had no sister to look affectionately at him, poor fellow. 'I say,' he continued, 'what does the lordly William say to these parties?'

'Dear me, William never troubles his head about us; besides, we generally take care to have them when he is not here. These things are not in his line by any means. I wish Amoretta was here though; she would really think it great fun: nothing ever bores her by any chance.'

'When do they come to the Court, Charley? do you know?' asked Sebastian.

‘Who, Uncle John and Amy the beloved one? Some day this week—to-day or to-morrow, I think; but they always take us by surprise, you know. My mother has their rooms always ready; and after all it is Uncle John’s own house, and we are only tenants at will or something of that kind. But it is such fun to hear the bell ring, and to see Amoretta flit in just like a fairy dropped from the clouds, and then Uncle John follows, grave and wiry-looking, like the Ghost in “Hamlet.”’

‘Charley, what a description!’ cried Gertrude.
‘I doat upon Uncle John.’

‘Oh, so do I; he is such a darling, as the beloved one says. How rich it is, Gerty, to hear her call William, Willy! It is so singularly inappropriate. William is the image of Uncle John.’

‘I am sorry to differ from you, Charley, but I see no resemblance whatever. Uncle John is much the better looking of the two. Isn’t it time for the people to be coming, Seb?’

‘Who is coming?’ asked Charles. ‘The Hugheses, I suppose?’

‘O dear me, yes, and their four white-headed boys, who always look as if their clothes were so tight for them they can hardly breathe; then papa’s curates, whom you know—at least, you know Mr. Chorley; Mr. and Mrs. Smith—you know them too.’

‘I think I have heard that name before,’ interpolated Master Charles, mischievously.

‘Now, Charley, no second-hand wit; besides, interruptions are *so* rude. Well, as I was going to say, Mr. Smith is the spasmodic man, with a nose and chin like Mother Hubbard.’

‘What a lot! Anybody else?’

‘The Baileys of course, and the Mackenzies, with their grandchildren, and the Burnses.’

‘Oh, Mrs. Burns! nice little woman: a great friend of yours, isn’t she, Gerty? and the children with all the extraordinary names. What was the last? Athanasius, wasn’t it?’

‘No, Athanasius died, luckily. Constantine and the twins came after him, Cyril and Irene—Gertrude (she is my godchild). But we shall only have Helena, Basil, and Augustine to-day, I suppose. It is his doing, the children having all those appellations; she has nothing to do with it, poor little woman.’

‘They are very Pre-Raphaelite-looking children,’ remarked Seb.

‘Yes, they are rather delicate, poor little beings! and they are all so poor, too. I am very fond of that dear little Lizzie, which is the matter-of-fact name in which Mrs. Burns rejoices.’

‘By the bye, is my aunt coming, Charley?’ asked Sebastian.

‘I think not: she would have come, but she is not very famous this afternoon; the heat has knocked her up. Ah, there is Aunt Lily.’

Mrs. Arthur Dayrell appeared at this moment, leading by the hand a handsome boy about six years old. She was in every way extremely un-

like her daughter. Gertrude was tall, I may say a little Juno-like in her air and appearance ; there was a general look of repose and serenity in her well-cut features and beautiful candid countenance, clear complexion, and large thoughtful eyes. Her mother, on the contrary, was small and fragile-looking, quick and restless in her movements, with a gentle animation about her that rendered her in her way equally attractive. Little Reginald was her youngest and the darling of her heart ; he was extremely handsome, but he possessed, as the French say, *une beauté insolente*. And in truth he was both shy and proud, and, as Charley said of him one day, had evidently never seen the person he liked better than himself.

‘How do you do, Aunt Lily?’ said Charley in his most *gracieuse* manner.

‘My dear Charley, I am most pleased to see you,’ said his aunt, as she shook hands with him ; ‘Sebastian will be grateful for your help,

as he has promised to row the children about on the river by turns.'

'What is become of Uncle Arthur? I don't see him.'

'Oh, he has been kept by some parish business. He is coming very soon with Mr. Herbert. My dear Gertrude, I wish you would go and see if the Hugheses are not come. I thought I heard wheels just now. And now, Charley, how do you like Windsor?'

'Oh, well enough, Aunt Lily; it is better than Dublin anyhow. But there is a talk of our going to Canada; that would be tip-top—next thing to real service.'

'I don't quite know what your mother would say to that, Charley,' said Mrs. Arthur Dayrell, looking, however, fondly at him.

'Oh, my mother knows I am dying to see service,' said Charley, blushing a little; 'she is all for my *doing* something.'

'Well, Charley, it is hard to believe you old

enough for that yet, though I declare you are nearly as tall as my William : how you all grow !'

And in truth Charley Dayrell was a fine handsome curly-headed young fellow, fresh and fair, who looked as if he thoroughly intended to enjoy everything in life.

'I wish I had time to talk to you, Charley ; but you must come over and see me to-morrow morning.'

'With pleasure, Aunt Lily. You know, I suppose, that Uncle John and Amy are coming to-morrow or next day?'

'Yes, so your mother told me. I am very glad to hear it ; their coming is always such a delight to her. But here are my guests, to whom I must attend. Where is Redgie?'

But the invited guests, who had apparently all arrived at once in a body, made their appearance on the lawn, and Mrs. Dayrell hastened to welcome them with the kindly manner which made her always seem glad to see every one.

Primo, came Mr. and Mrs. Smith. He was round, short, and, as Gertrude had described him, with a nose and chin like Mother Hubbard. His movements were exceedingly brisk, and his countenance wore a perpetual smile. He was very fond of doing the honours of everybody's house, and when he dined out pressed his hosts' victuals on his neighbours with the most affectionate consideration. 'A most obliging little man, Mr. Smith,' was the general opinion that was entertained of him. Mrs. Smith was tall, pensive, and always dressed in black alpaca and a black cloth cloak even in the height of summer; she stammered slightly when she spoke, and when you talked to her always listened to what somebody else was saying to a third person, which was very pleasant and satisfactory.

Close upon the heels of the Smiths followed the Hugheses and their young progeny, juveniles who hung their white heads in a state of utter stupefaction from intense bashfulness when they

were first spoken to, from which state they were destined to emerge with startling abruptness into one of rampant whooping and rushing all over the rectory garden. Luckily the tea tables were placed under a tent, before the entrance to which a 'magic cordon' was drawn, otherwise the destruction of crockery would have been imminent. Mrs. Hughes called everything 'sweet,' and was a very refined person.

Mr. Bailey, Lord Kendal's agent, his wife and family, followed; Dr. Mackenzie, the good old physician of the place, equally clever in his profession, kind to the poor, and liked by every one who knew him, his widowed daughter who lived with him, and her four fatherless children; the rear was brought up by the Burnses and Gertrude, who was leading by the hand a little pale flax-haired creature who was not nearly so long as his name, Augustine.

The rector, Mr. Arthur Dayrell, closed the procession with young Mr. Burns. The latter wore

a coat so long that it nearly reached his heels, and an exceeding high waistcoat. There was nothing light about him but his hair, which was of a whitey-brown colour. He was rather stiff in his deportment, and being very shy, and very much impressed at the same time with his priestly position, his manners were a good deal embarrassed, and it was very difficult indeed to put him at his ease. Fortunately, his little wife was the most cheery notable little woman that ever lived, and a hard time she had of it to make both ends meet and to bring up a family of delicate children. *They* were just like the children that Dobson sometimes paints, with perfectly straight yellowish hair that looked like floss silk or a species of fluff. Luckily, Mrs. Burns ruled at home, or Mr. Burns would have killed off his children long ago by the rules and practices he laid down for them. If he had had his way he would have taken them to church at seven o'clock every morning, summer and winter, he would make them fast on all

vigils and through Lent, and Heaven knows what other hardships the tender creatures would have had to undergo, had not Mrs. Burns peremptorily forbidden all such experiments, and generally answered his suggestions about Helena or Basil with, 'Now, Davie, just leave the children alone: because you are a priest, that's no reason why you should understand babies, you know.' So Lizzie generally got her own way. Mr. Burns, meanwhile, at the bottom of his heart had a great respect for his neighbour Mr. Dayrell, the rector of Derley Moor, and was more at his ease with him than with most people. But no one who knew Arthur Dayrell could fail to like, even to love him. Though not absolutely handsome, his countenance was singularly attractive, and he was one of those men, so rarely met with, who inspire the strongest attachment in those with whom they come habitually in contact. No one was ever ruffled by a harsh or ungentle word from him. With all the sensitiveness of a peculiarly

refined and fastidious mind, he was marvellously indulgent and forbearing towards the stupidities or vulgarities of others, and his bright sunny temperament always disposed him to see the best side of things. But his character will develop itself by degrees, and we will only add that he looked young to be the father of his Oxford boy, Sebastian, not to mention his eldest son, now absent with his regiment, the Rifle Brigade.

‘Oh, Arthur, here you are at last, dear,’ cried Mrs. Dayrell.

‘I am afraid I am rather late,’ he said, with a smile; ‘but—ah, Redgie, my boy! what are you going to do with your young friends?’ as the child clung to his arm.

‘Papa’ was only wanted to set the amusements going. Thanks to Sebastian and Charley, the boats were manned, and soon received a jovial freight, Sebastian and Mr. Bailey rowing one boat, Charley and Gertrude the other. The

elders meanwhile strolled about the grounds, which were not very extensive, though pretty, and the mammas twaddled very happily about their children, and the gentlemen walked about and talked parish business or politics, and the repose and freshness of the pretty garden was felt as a recreation by those who spent their lives in tramping round large districts, or sitting in fusty school-rooms, catechizing little boys and girls.

Then came tea, a grand affair, with lots of strawberries and raspberries from the rectory garden, and forced fruit from the hothouses at Dayrell Court, and cakes, and bread and butter, and rich cream : and Mr. Smith was in his glory.

‘Mrs. Dayrell, allow me to offer you some bread. Some raspberries? Sugar, Mrs. Burns? Dear me, Miss Dayrell, let me do that; pray let me fill the tea-pot. Miss Hughes, will you take another dish? Elizabeth, my dear—Mrs. Smith, will you take another cup? A little more tea for my wife, Miss Dayrell, if you please.’

‘I wish he would drink his own tea,’ whispered Gertrude to Mrs. Burns, who instantly took the hint, and snubbed Mr. Smith so effectually when he rushed round the table with some comestible—knocking over, as he did so, two chairs, one containing the youngest Master Hughes, who forthwith howled—that he was utterly crushed for the time being.

After tea came some games, then a grand display of fireworks under the auspices of Sebastian, Charley, Mr. Herbert, the curate, and John Daniells, the rectory factotum; then supper, a light meal consisting chiefly of lemonade, sandwiches, cakes, and biscuits; and the festivity which inaugurated Master Reginald Dayrell’s sixth birthday was terminated. All the guests went away apparently pleased. Mrs. Smith said in her mournful tones that it had been a charming treat in her secluded existence. Mrs. Hughes, having mortally offended Reginald by calling him a sweet child, and by observing what beautiful

eyes he had, pressed Mrs. Dayrell's hand affectionately, and declared that it had been an enchanting *fête*. Mr. Chorley, who was placid and resigned, and who 'regretted so much that Mrs. Chorley's delicate health had prevented her from partaking of Mrs. Dayrell's kind hospitality,' took his leave with his usual melancholy, and departed also.





CHAPTER II.

ANGEL.

SEB,' said Gertrude the morning following, 'I wish to have a phenomenon explained to me.'

'Go on,' said Seb, without raising his eyes from his book.

'Why do all the neighbours, and especially Mr. Hughes and Mrs. Smith, drink their tea with their spoons in their cups, bobbing against their noses?'

'I really don't know, but I'll inquire if you like,' answered Sebastian. 'It is an idiosyncrasy, I suppose, and a very curious one. They all do it. What a woman Mrs. Hughes is!'

'Yes,' said Gertrude: 'isn't she affected? but I believe she is liked in their parish, and she does

more good than that feckless Mrs. Smith, who does nothing.'

'What are you busy about there?'

'Oh, parish business : preparing work for the girls' school, if you really wish to know. By the bye, Uncle John and Amoretta are not come yet, and nobody knows when they will be here.'

'They are always uncertain ; but how do you know?'

'Mamma had a line from Aunt Alice this morning.'

A pause. Gertrude stitched away busily, and Seb read his thick book.

The door opened, and the rector looked in.

'Gerty, put away all that cotton print, and go and put on your habit.'

'My habit, papa?'

'Yes ; run, make haste ; it is a beautiful morning, and I want to go over to Hurst. Shall you like to come ? I must visit some of my people on my way, but you won't mind holding Acorn.'

‘Dear, no, papa. I’ll be ready in half a minute.’ And she darted off.

A quarter of an hour later Sebastian was putting her on her horse, a beautiful bay, a gift from Uncle John, with square-cut tail, a coat that Gerty could see her face in, small head, wicked eyes, ears laid back, and general expression of countenance as if he could eat everybody all round. But it was all play, as Gertrude always averred, as her steed danced about on his hind legs while her father mounted his clerical-looking but clever black pony, who eyed askance his friend’s gambols, and evidently considered Slender both young and frivolous. Gertrude rode as well as she did everything else : she had no fear, and had a hand as light as a feather ; but her father never was quite easy in his mind till Slender had settled down to his stride when they came on to the moor. Then the good horse had his two-mile canter, which steadied him for the rest of the ride.

After calling at two or three cottages, at all of which 'Miss' was earnestly requested to come in for a while, they resumed their ride towards Hurst, and Gertrude said,

'All this time, papa, I have asked no questions ; but I presume you are going to call on that dear old man, Padre Cristoforo, as I call him.'

'Precisely so ; but I have a particular reason for going there to-day, which you know nothing about.'

'Have you, papa ? Oh, then, do tell me directly,' said Gertrude, all eagerness.

'Curiosity, thy name is woman,' said Mr. Dayrell, sententiously.

'Yes, dear papa, it is ; but tell me all the same.'

'Well, it is quite a romantic business, which will just suit you. First of all, you know he is come here with a pupil.'

'Yes, papa, I heard that.'

'Exactly so. Well, you have heard me speak

occasionally of my cousin, Angela Lismore, who became a Roman Catholic several years ago?’

‘Oh, yes, papa; and her husband was a college friend of yours, wasn’t he? Sir Something Lismore—I forget his name.’

‘Florentius. Yes: what a thorough, good-hearted Irishman he was! He was a great friend of mine, poor fellow. I wish, however, he had not left me guardian to his boy. But he did, conjointly with his mother, who became a Roman Catholic two years after, and made the boy one too, before any one knew anything about it.’

‘Dear papa, how perplexing for you! What did you do?’

‘Well, of course I resigned the guardianship in the first place; but then Angela, to my surprise and, I must say, annoyance, implored me to retain it with such earnestness that it was impossible to refuse; so, here I am—a Protestant clergyman with a Roman Catholic ward who ought to be a Protestant.’

‘Poor papa! it is very kind of you,’ said Gerty, looking lovingly at him. ‘But are you the sole guardian?’

‘Why, no; happily, his poor mother, when she died, appointed her brother-in-law to act with me; but, fortunately, Sir Roswal Lismore will be of age in less than two years, and then I have done with him.’

‘Where is he now—not with Padre Cristoforo? Oh, what fun! Then you are going to see him now?’

‘I don’t see the *fun* of it exactly. However, he is with Padre Cristoforo, *alias* Maurice Antony, for a year, before going to Germany, where he is to finish his education. Hurst House, which, I believe, they call the Red House hereabouts, is, as you probably know, a shooting-place of Sir Roswal’s own, and has generally been let till this year. But, Gerty, while I ride on there, can you dispose of yourself in any way, as I must have half an hour’s talk with Antony?’

‘Yes, papa, perfectly. I will turn down the lane, and pay Mrs. Burns a visit : that will just do. I want to see Lizzie Burns.’

‘Very well, my dear child. I will be as quick as I can, and call for you. I must have a word with Burns, too, if he is at home, when I come back. He has got into hot water, I am afraid, with Creasy, the rector of Knipton, and I must help him out, for Burns is in the right, though, perhaps, not judicious. I almost wonder the Church of Rome has not caught your little Burns before now, Gerty.’

‘Oh, papa ! Mr. Burns would never become a Roman Catholic : he is passionately devoted to the Greek Church ; and he really is very agreeable when you get him on that subject, though rather high-flown.’

‘That accounts for all the Greek names he gives his children. But here is the turning to the vicarage, so here we part for the present.’

Arthur Dayrell trotted off towards Hurst,

while Gerty turned in at the little gate, which was opened by the gardener and sexton in one, to whom she entrusted the care of her steed, while she walked without ceremony into the house. Gerty was always struck with the air of neatness which characterized the modest abode of these good people. Mrs. Burns evidently possessed that useful quality which the Americans call 'faculty,' and she seemed to have transmitted it to her children ; for from the eldest girl, Helena, down to the youngest who could walk, all were useful in their way. On this occasion a slender little lad met Miss Dayrell in the tiny hall, and without any symptom of shyness, but with a very demure manner, said,

'Mamma is in the parlour with the children.'

'Is she ?' said Gertrude, stooping to kiss him, and adding, 'Let me see, you are Augustine, I think ? Where are Basil and Helena ?'

'Basil has finished his lessons ; he is in the

garden, weeding the strawberry bed. Helena is helping Sarah in the kitchen.'

'And you, you little duck, are you very useful, too?'

'Yes, I am,' answered this quaint little person. 'I helped to take care of the *littlest* baby this morning. You know there are three now, only Conny can nearly walk. Twins are a great trial,' he added, shaking his wise little head in such a comical manner that Gertrude, who had been endeavouring to retain her gravity, now burst out laughing, and telling him that he was the funniest darling she had ever seen, she asked him to tell his mamma that she was there, and ask if she might come in.

But here the parlour door opened, and Mrs. Burns, who had thought she recognized Gertrude's voice, begged her joyfully to come in.

'You won't mind the children, dear Gerty, for I have nowhere else to put them just at present. And Conny is very good,' she added,

patting the flaxen head of little Constantine, aged thirteen months, who sat on the floor staring at Gertrude. 'It is only your naughty little god-daughter who won't go to sleep and disturbs poor Cyril.'

'Oh, give her to me,' said Gertrude, throwing off her plumed hat, and delighting her affectionate little friend by lifting Miss Irene out of her cradle, undaunted by her cries; and actually, by judicious coaxing, Gerty soon succeeded in restoring the peace which the little one's name signified, but her conduct belied.

Quiet being thus restored, the usual small talk proceeded between the young matron and the maiden. Gerty asked how Lizzie's new schoolmistress went on, and how Mr. Burns' evening service was attended; and Mrs. Burns inquired whether Lady Amabel was arrived, and how Lord Kendal's new cottages progressed; and Gerty groaned over her parish grievances; and Lizzie adduced worse of 'poor Davie's' to match them.

And now, while the two friends are thus deeply engaged, let us follow Arthur Dayrell on his ride to Hurst House, where Padre Christoforo, *alias* Mr. Maurice Antony, dwelt.

Mr. Antony had once been a clergyman of the Church of England ; now he was a priest of the Church of Rome. Once he had been Arthur Dayrell's guide, instructor, and dearest friend ; now, though years and changes had not weakened a spark of Arthur's affection for him, he was no longer the being to whom he looked up beyond all other counsellors as he had once done. When Maurice Antony left the Church, his dearest friends left him ; and to a man of his affectionate and clinging nature, this was the greatest trial he had to endure in changing his faith. But, according to his creed, the greater the sacrifice, the greater the merit ; and when he saw the men who had loved him and revered him during their Oxford career now stand aloof from him with fear and mistrust, as one who had

left the fold, he felt all that he had given up for his religion's sake, and applied to himself the promise of his Divine Master, 'Whosoever hath left house or brethren, in this present world shall receive tenfold more, and in the world to come life everlasting.' Arthur Dayrell alone, of the set to whom he had been most fondly attached at Oxford—and these numbered some of the most rising young statesmen, the most promising youths of the day—had stood by him. Arthur had been blamed for this, had been warned that this fatal affection would draw him after the friend he loved so blindly; but they who reasoned thus mistook Arthur's character, and Antony's also. The latter never attempted to convert his friend; the former was too well grounded in the pure and simple faith he professed, to be in any danger. And though their intercourse was much restricted—for in one thing Arthur was firm, he never permitted Antony to enter beneath his own roof—still the friends met periodically, and often

interchanged thoughts on those holy themes upon which, long ago, it had been their delight to dwell, for they could meet on that ground which is common to all true followers of Christ; and still did the pious and earnest Arthur Dayrell feel that he derived nothing but good from the solemn and deep enthusiasm of the ardent and high-souled Antony.

But in truth Antony was not a proselytizer; and were it not that the Church of Rome is ever ready to move heaven and earth to make one convert, he might not have been considered quite such a genuine one as they could wish. He still, if the truth were known, held some independent opinions upon a variety of subjects, which it was deemed advisable to concede to his tender conscience. When he left the Church of England he was married, but on his wife's death, two years after, he had taken holy orders in the Church of Rome. His means were small, and he took in a few pupils, sons of Roman Catholic

gentlemen of good family. At this moment he was reading with Sir Roswal Lismore, previously to his going abroad.

Arthur Dayrell rode up to the Red House, an old and rather decayed-looking building, and rang the bell, the handle of which was half hid with ivy. An old man presently opened the door, and seeing who it was, said,

‘Oh, it is you, Mr. Arthur? Yes, his reverence is at home.’

‘Can you get some one to hold my pony, Thomas?’

Thomas, who remembered Mr. Dayrell ‘a young gentleman’ at Oxford, undertook for the black cob, which he delivered to a small boy to hold, and ushered Mr. Dayrell into the little parlour where his old friend was writing.

Maurice Antony looked up as Arthur entered, and his worn but striking countenance lighted up as he saw him. His hair, thick and dark, was much marked with grey; his eyes, luminous,

clear, and thoughtful, gleamed from under the straight well-marked brows ; the mouth, gentle, almost mournful in expression, was the most beautiful feature in his face. His voice was melody in itself ; his manner was very quiet, very gentle, very earnest ; in his speech there was a quaintness and simplicity which seldom failed to enchain his listeners, especially when, like Arthur, they were aware what a store-house of learning and wisdom lay concealed beneath. Antony's pleading expression always stole over his countenance when he saw Arthur : at one time he had fondly thought that wherever he led, Arthur would surely follow ; but herein his usual discrimination failed, for Arthur, beneath an exterior as gentle, as loving as his own, bore a mind and heart, truer, stronger, firmer far.

It was with the undiminished ease and friendship that nothing could shake, however, that the two men at once fell into conversation upon the

subject which had brought Arthur here. This was how to get at the spiritual needs of a large population, which had sprung up round some new great works which were in process of construction, and as many of the families were Irish and Roman Catholics, he wished to consult Antony on the subject. While they were talking, there entered the most beautiful boy that Arthur had ever seen in his life. He looked about eighteen or nineteen, but had none of the awkward undevelopment that boys of that age generally suffer from, though he had apparently not attained his full growth. The rector had been accustomed to consider his own William and Sebastian as fine handsome youths, but they were quite thrown into the shade here, as he noticed the small head, poised like that of a Greek statue on the symmetrical shoulders, the magnificent eyes, Irish in their deep grey colour, the complexion transparent and blushing like that of a girl, and the well-cut decided lips and

square chin relieving the face at once from all symptoms of effeminacy.

Maurice Antony watched the impression that had been made with a smile, and then said,

‘Come in, my son. Arthur, this is your young ward, Sir Roswal Lismore.’

‘He has indeed “the dangerous gift of beauty,”’ thought Arthur; and as this young Antinous advanced with a mixture of shyness and courtesy that was irresistibly winning, Arthur thought of a scene where a young mother was carrying in her arms a yearling boy with golden curls all dishevelled on his beautiful head, his rosy cheeks flushed with sleep, and who held out at once two dimpled arms, quite willing, even then, to acknowledge Arthur as a friend. Arthur then hardly knew which was the loveliest; in fact, he had once in his boyish days been greatly attracted by his cousin Angela.

‘Take him; you must love him, Arthur,’ said the Irish beauty, as she placed the boy in his

arms: 'his name is Roswal Florence *Angel*.' The young coquette emphasized the last word, and as Arthur took the boy in his arms for a moment he could not help smiling at the strange assemblage of names that had been bestowed upon him. 'Of course he will be only *Angel* to you,' said the young mother, as she took back her treasure; and Arthur even then could not repress an involuntary sigh.

If he sighed now again at beholding the strippling *Angel*, it was to think what a doubtful career opened before the youth whose religion was such a bar to his prospects. It now struck him that as the boy was his ward he could do no less than ask him to his house; accordingly when *Angel* had left the room, Arthur turned to his friend.

'Maurice, I should like to see that lad again. Shall he come and dine with us *en famille*, eh? What think you?'

Antony smiled.

‘That is a quaint way of giving an invitation, Arthur. If you ask him, surely he can go.’

‘Ah, Maurice, you know what I mean, and understand my scruples. Tell me what this boy is. You know I have young ones of my own, and though I am his guardian now, of his previous bringing up I know but little. I can trust your account of him.’

‘He is a *good* boy, Arthur, believe me,’ said Antony, with emphasis. ‘His religious feelings are deep, and he does not parade them where they would be unwelcome. You may very safely receive him,’ he added, smiling.

‘Very well; shall we say next Thursday? Good; and now I must go for Gertrude, who is waiting for me. Good bye, Maurice.’

The friends shook hands and parted; and as Arthur trotted off on his active pony, Antony gazed at his slight figure with a feeling that he could not quite define. He then called to Sir Roswal Lismore.

‘Angel,’ he said, ‘you have seen nothing of the world yet, and, as I have already told you, that is not good for you. I do not wish to bring you up like the young Philammon in the desert.’

‘Who was he, father?’ asked the boy, wonderingly.

‘Well, no matter, Angel:’ the observation had slipped from him inadvertently, and was regretted as soon as uttered, for surely ‘Hypatia’ would be the last book that a Roman Catholic tutor would wish his pupil to read. He hastened to change the subject.

‘You will dine on Thursday with my old friend Arthur Dayrell, and become acquainted with his family. Shall you like it?’

‘The gentleman who was here to-day? Yes, I think I shall,’ he added, meditatively. ‘And shall you go, father?’

‘No, Angel; but you will get on well with Mr. Dayrell, and even with his son Sebastian I doubt not you will have objects in common.

He is a pleasing young fellow, and, though not so bookish as you, my Angel, is, I am told, well read. Now for our Greek; we must lose no more time.'

The submissive boy was soon at work, happy, seemingly, and desiring no other life than the secluded one he led. It *was* Philammon in the desert. But would the wakening come as it did to him?

Arthur meanwhile called for Gertrude, and, after a little conversation with Mr. Burns, he lifted his girl on her horse, and the two rode home together, Gertrude keen to hear all that had passed at the Red House. She was interested in his account of the young Lismore, and when the subject was exhausted, expatiated, in her turn, upon the goodness and the engaging qualities of her friend Lizzie Burns.

'What a contrast it makes to go there and to the Hugheses, papa! The other day when I went with mamma to see Mrs. Hughes, it looked

so comfortless and untidy, and those great boys so rude and dirty, as if they were never washed ; and the little Burnses are always so civil and well-behaved, and I know they are so useful, and the little ones so fresh and sweet, though their clothes are as simple as possible.'

'My dear, in a large family with no servants, you must reflect that it is not easy to keep a lot of noisy boys clean and tidy.'

'It is not *that*, papa ; for Basil came in from the garden, with his hands all earthy : of course he could not help it ; but as soon as he saw me he ran off, and in another minute came back all rosy and clean, to shake hands with me, ready to do anything else for his mother.'

'Well, my dear, you have my full permission to admire Mrs. Burns as much as you like ; she is a jewel of a little woman. It often makes me feel ashamed of our own luxuries when I think of them and the Hugheses and others.'



CHAPTER III.

GERTRUDE.

THURSDAY arrived in due course, a hot, broiling, delicious summer day, delicious at least for those who had no work to do; but as these were, comparatively speaking, few in number, the remainder would gladly have dispensed with some of the heat. Amongst these latter were the rector, Arthur Dayrell, and our Gertrude. Upon Gertrude devolved most of the work that generally falls to the share of the clergyman's wife, for Mrs. Dayrell had plenty to do at home, and did it well too. There was not a better manager of a household than Arthur's pretty, fragile-looking wife, and there was not a more snug charming abode, I will venture to say, in all the country

than Derley Rectory. As regards the parish, Gerty undertook the hard work of that department to a great extent: though Mrs. Dayrell was head, Gerty had to be hands in all such works as came within the province of female ability. Now, Gertrude did not do this because she liked it, or because she was obliged to do it by parental command. She had been brought up to do it, and it came to her naturally as a part of her duty, and so she did it without considering whether she liked it or not. When her cousin Lady Amy was at the Court for one of her fleeting visits, she would often accompany Gertrude on one of her village excursions, which pleased everybody vastly. It was a great event to have a visit from Amy once a year, while Gertrude was regarded as an institution, and her visits were productive of no excitement whatever. However, Gerty accepted this condition of her being with considerable philosophy, for it was the greatest amusement to her when she

could lay hands on Amy for a village walk : of *her*, however, more anon. As I was saying, Gertrude had a district and a class at the school, and was on visiting terms with half her father's large population ; nevertheless the poor people did not call down blessings on her head as she passed, as they are supposed to do in books. No bedridden old women cried, ' There is my angel a-come to brighten our path.' The little children did not look reverentially into her face—not by any means : the population of Derley Moor were not given to sentiment in any shape—they were rather of the rough-and-ready order, and spoke their ideas plainly, but somewhat uncouthly at times. There, however, is no denying that all Gerty's friends and acquaintances were fond of her ; her well-bred manner pleased them, and they were always glad to hear her step on the gravel, her knock at the door—never omitted—her gentle ' May I come in ? ' Gertrude never preached to them ; that she con-

sidered her father's business, or Mr. Herbert's, or Mr. Chorley's. She *called* upon them, and heard with interest the details of Tommy Wilson, who was very bad with his teeth, or Elizabeth Martin, who had got such a bad finger she could not get on with her work, with the same kindly interest that she would have listened to Mrs. Burns's lamentations about Helena or Augustine. Again, Gertrude's Sunday class did not consist of miraculous children, clad in brown holland, lovely and smiling. Once a week she had a class of boys, with which she had only lately begun, in the hope of civilizing them a little. In her heart she considered it a hopeless attempt, as she had never been able to manage her brother Reginald at home; but after the rough fellows had got used to her, and left off grinning from ear to ear at 'the lady,' and after she had learned to overcome her aversion to the smell of fustian, this class became a great interest to her. Mr. Hawke, the master, was

delighted, and assured her that it was now the ambition of the school to be taught by her. In short, Gerty led a useful life, and though she had plenty to do, she always found time to do it in. She had time to read any book that her father recommended to her, to ride with him, to draw, to run over to the Court to see Aunt Alice, to wait on her mother, to take Redgie's lessons, to do anything that was wanted to be done. She could row a boat — swim even — and act charades to admiration. Her father and Sebastian were devotedly fond of her, and her cousins thought her a paragon. One person, however, thought it necessary to keep her down, and this was her brother William. William, who was his mother's favourite, thought it his mission in life to keep down the conceit of people in general and of Gertrude in particular. He depreciated all she did, constantly scolded her in her childish days, and gave her long lectures as she grew older; told her she was conceited,

spoiled, self-important, and always wound up by assuring her that in London she would soon find her proper level of mediocrity. Gertrude, whose principal fault was in reality a want of self-confidence, did not resent these strictures of her eldest brother, as she entertained the greatest awe of and respect for him; but she often regretted keenly that William could not love her, and felt altogether subdued and crushed in his presence. When this climax was attained, William, who was really good-hearted, would relent, descend from his pedestal, and take his sister into favour again for a time.

Meanwhile Gertrude grew up a placid, contented, and really very beautiful girl, and seldom wished to change her lot.

On this same hot morning she had gone off to one of her many avocations, and Mrs. Arthur Dayrell was sitting in her pretty little morning room busy about some work for one of the schools. The snuggery looked deliciously cool

and fresh this morning : the windows were wide open, but the great outside blinds kept off all the glare of the sun ; the floor was covered with Indian matting, pink and white ; the rose-bud chintz that covered the furniture added to the summery aspect of the whole ; while the air was loaded with the perfume of roses and geraniums from within and without, as the garden was in full beauty and the tables had vases of flowers in every direction. A great Persian cat and a tiny Cuba dog occupied a soft mat at the open window, and Cockle, the latter, was too sleepy to tease his companion, as was his wont. The soft west wind occasionally wafted aside the muslin curtain, and the sound of John's scythe fell with a pleasing hum upon the ear. A rosy boy, clad in a short white tunic bound with blue braid, lay all his length on a settee near the open window, the light breeze playing with his disordered curls. This was Master Reginald, learning his lesson, and longing in his heart to

be running in the garden, where, his mother justly thought, it would be too hot for him. Reginald differed from her entirely, and he quite envied John, mowing with that delightful scythe—whether John enjoyed his occupation so much is another question.

A knock at the door, a shout of ‘come in’ from Redgie, and a violent barking from Cockle, caused Mrs. Dayrell to look up from her brown holland; and the door opening, admitted a small figure clad in pink muslin, with great blue eyes and curls of flaxen hair, and a most coquettish straw hat. Behold, then, the illustrious Lady Amy—Aimée—Amoretta—the Beloved One—as her cousins playfully called her, ringing all the changes on her name, which I believe was in reality Amabel.

‘Come at last, Aunt Lily,’ was her greeting; ‘and the first thing I do is to come and see you. Only arrived last night. Oh, this delightful room! what a Paradise of coolness!’

All this was said while Aunt Lily was kissing her volatile niece, and waiting for an opportunity to say her word of welcome.

‘ And when did you arrive, my child ? Come, sit down and cool yourself ; it was not prudent of you walking here in this heat. I wanted Gerty to leave her class for to-day, but she would go.’

‘ Papa and I came late last night ; and you have no idea how enchanting, how divine the country looks after that horrible steaming place, London. We came by a late train, having telegraphed to Aunt Alice to have tea ready for us, and the drive from the station was heavenly. Oh dear ! ’ And Amy sighed from satisfaction, heat, and exhaustion from talking so fast.

‘ Charley came with me, but he was seized by Sebastian, whom we found reading under the great tree, and I came in here. I may stay to luncheon, Aunt Lily, I suppose ?—Well, Reginald, you have not a word to say to me, I see.’

And as Redgie put on his most *mutin* expression and uttered no words, Amy instantly caught him, hugged him, and let him go, half affronted half astonished at such decided measures.

‘And now, Aunt Lily, I have hardly looked at you yet : you don’t look very well.’

Aunt Lily smiled and said, ‘But as to you, Amy, I think you are looking very flourishing. Have you had a great deal of dissipation?’

‘Oh, ever so much ; but we are going to have a ball at home, which will be delicious. Aunt Alice has promised to come, and you must let me have Gertrude, and we shall have immense fun. I have all sorts of designs upon Gerty. May I have her all this afternoon?’

‘There is Gerty coming across the lawn, so you can ask her yourself that question : she will be delighted with the surprise awaiting her.’

And Aunt Lily kissed again the pretty face that looked up into hers.

The next minute Amy was in the garden,

running lightly across the turf, and was clinging to Gertrude before that somewhat stately young person was aware of the descent that had been made upon her. Gertrude was clad in brown holland trimmed with white braid, looped up a little over her blue and white striped cotton petticoat—cool, but busy-looking attire; and, hot as the weather was, she looked fresh and neat as ever, with her trim little collar and white cuffs. Amy looked all gossamer and lightness beside her, it must be confessed. Gertrude was delighted to see her cousin; and Charley and Seb joining them, they established themselves under the shade of the great tree on the pretty lawn, in thorough enjoyment of the exquisite weather. Gertrude especially had earned her rest, for the school-work had certainly been rather oppressive that morning.

‘I am come to stay all the afternoon, till five o’clock, and then, Gertrude, you are going to drive me in the pony carriage, which is coming

here, and you and Seb are going to dine with us *en demi-toilette* in the evening.'

'That 's all beautifully arranged, Amy, except the last part,' said Gertrude. 'We have a dinner party at the highly fashionable hour of eight.'

'Why, who dines? nobody but the curates, I'll be bound,' said Charley, 'and you can cut them, I am sure.'

'The dinner party consists of Sir Roswal Lismore, and he dines and sleeps.'

'Sir Roswal Lismore! what a delicious name. Charley, you and I will come in the evening and see how they get on.'

'Oh, do,' cried Seb and Gertrude both at once, 'and make Uncle John come. Papa would be so delighted; and we will walk back with you in the moonlight.'

Thus they talked, idly enjoying the summer sunshine like so many butterflies as they were, till Aunt Lily called them to the cool and pleasant dining-room, where Amy flew into

raptures with the luncheon. And it *was* an Arcadian sort of meal, consisting chiefly of salads and strawberries, and lemonade iced and delightfully cold, while cold lamb was artistically hidden away on the sideboard, not to mar the general effect. Amy was duly informed that these luxuries were set forth in her honour, and she fully appreciated the attention.

Towards the close of the meal a step was heard without, and a tall handsome young man of three or four and twenty came into the room. He stopped on the door-sill, as if astonished at the numbers he found, but Mrs. Dayrell sprang from her chair with an exclamation of satisfaction, and Amy clapped her hands in an ecstasy, crying,

‘Why, it’s Willy!’

Nobody ever looked less like Willy and more like William. He was a tall stately young man, with a good deal of family likeness to his sister in his features, but with a much more sombre

expression. A shyness, which arose partly from pride, made his manner ungracious, and had during his boyhood been a constant source of vexation to his father, who was particularly kind and courteous himself to every one. William, however, was quite satisfied with their respective positions : his father, to be sure, was universally beloved ; but *he* was feared, which, to use the words of Mr. Pecksniff, William found evidently very soothing. However, he had been absent for some time, and all were mutually pleased to meet. William received his mother's delighted greeting with a proper air of cordiality, and cast a glance of undisguised admiration on his pretty little cousin Amy, which the little witch was quite conscious of and much amused at. When William had told his history, and explained how long his leave was to last, he had to learn home news, and, to begin with, was not over-pleased to hear of the visitor expected. Not even the prospect of a late dinner—not a frequent occur-

rence in the clergyman's household — could reconcile him to a stranger the first night of his coming. Amy, however, set this slight discord to rights in a moment by inviting him to dine with her father and aunt at the big house, bargaining for his escort to the rectory after dinner, for the child declared she would come and see how they got on with Philammon, Dr. Antony's name for the young Lismore, but which Sebastian also found very appropriate. William readily agreed to the condition, and so it was settled. Amy meanwhile took possession of Gertrude for the afternoon, and the two sauntered into the shady wood which divided the rectory from the big house, and chattered as young persons will of all things indiscriminately.

‘When are you coming to see papa, Gerty?’ said Amy.

‘To-morrow, I hope,’ answered Gerty. ‘I am longing to see him. How is he this summer, Amoretta?’

‘Why, do you know, I don’t think he is so well, but Dr. Drury goes on saying that he only wants care and that sort of thing, and papa is so cheery, and will not hear of being thought ill.’

‘You take good care of him, I know,’ said Gertrude.

‘To be sure I do: I am quite a dragon,’ said Amy, laughing.

And Gertrude wondered whether Amabel was aware that her doting father had a mortal complaint, which might certainly be kept at bay for years, but which might also carry him off suddenly.

‘Uncle John reminds me of papa,’ she said; ‘not in face a bit—Seb thinks him like William—but they have the same gentle manners; and how papa does worship him, Amoretta!’

‘Well, it is mutual: I am sure papa thinks there is nobody like Uncle Arthur. Do you remember Uncle Charles, Gerty?’

‘Yes, a little; he was so handsome, I believe. Papa says Charley is like him, though not nearly so regularly good-looking.’

‘Papa is very fond of Charley,’ observed Amoretta: ‘he looks upon him quite like a son, I think. And I say, Gerty—it is a great secret, and I don’t think Charley knows it yet, but he is so pleased with him that he is going to raise his allowance. Aunt Alice was rather distressed, but papa says it is right that Charley should learn the proper use of money.’

‘I wonder what William will think of that? His opinion is that Charley is quite spoiled by your father.’

‘I have no doubt Mr. William thinks there is something radically wrong somewhere, and that *he* ought to have been the heir presumptive, instead of Mr. Charles Reginald Dayrell.’

‘Fie, Amoretta! how naughty of you!’

‘Naughty or not, it is so, I am sure. But I don’t care; “Charley is my darling,”’ and she

hummed the air ; then suddenly breaking off, said, 'and isn't he yours, Gerty ?'

'No, he is my cousin,' said Gertrude gravely.

Amy burst out laughing.

'Oh, Gerty, how matter-of-fact you are, to be sure ! Well, you are Charley's darling, if he is not yours.'

'Amy, Amy, I wish you would not talk so wildly,' said Gertrude, blushing up to the eyes. 'Papa would be so annoyed.'

'Poor Gerty ! well, I won't ; so now we will go back to the rectory, for the pony carriage will be come, and we will go and enjoy our drive. You shall drive, Gerty : I am lazy.'

Amy kept her word. About nine o'clock a slender being clad in gossamer appeared, escorted by William and Charles, at the rectory window. What a heavenly night it was ! The moon was at the full, and shone upon the group which was sitting in front of the house—the gentlemen enjoying their coffee. It shone upon the 'angel'

countenance of the young Philammon, who leaning against the wall of the house in the lissome unconscious ease of attitude which might have belonged to a son of the desert, was taking in his first ideas of beauty by gazing unperceived on Gertrude's noble features, as she sat in her snowy muslin robes, her eyes fixed, as was their wont, upon her father, and absorbed in listening to his astronomical talk with Mr. Herbert. Mamma was discoursing to polite but bashful Mr. Chorley on the merits of Reginald — a favourite theme ; and Cockle lay in Gertrude's lap, and enjoyed in his own way the almost tropical heat and stillness.

The new comers were gladly welcomed, and Amy was seated in an arm-chair, which Sebastian and Sir Roswal rushed off to fetch for her ; and the young people were soon clustered round her, her bright merry talk and musical laughter charming Angel himself from his shyness, and causing his great fawn-like eyes to wander from

one cousin to another as if bewildered by so much beauty. But he made one discovery: somehow he felt that he could talk better to Lady Amy than to her cousin.

Gerty and her brothers walked back a good way with Charley and Amoretta after the pleasant evening was over, and more than one person had new thoughts that night.

Gerty lay in her pretty bed, watching the moon through the white curtain and listening to the nightingales. She thought quietly of Angel Lismore and the grey eyes which had excited the raptures of her mother and Cousin Amy, lovingly of 'papa' and Seb; and then she went back, and said to herself that there was something very clear and candid in Charley's bright honest face, though it was not absolutely handsome really she supposed, at least so William always said; and her last thought was, how nice that Uncle John should be so fond of his heir, and so kind to him!



CHAPTER IV.

MRS. CHARLES DAYRELL.

CHARLES wished his cousin good night, and ran up the broad oak staircase of Dayrell Court, opened a green baize door, knocked at an inner one, and, receiving permission to enter, found himself in the presence of a beautiful woman, Mrs. Charles Dayrell, his mother. The young widow, for she was not forty, was really beautiful. Charley, who had an immense admiration for her, thought he had seldom seen anything so lovely as that classic face with its fine outlines, or the *pose* of the figure as she reclined in a low arm-chair by the open window, a lamp on the table by her side, and her soft dark eyes raised to the starlit sky. Not a breath was stirring, the

night air was heavy with the fragrance of flowers : what a pretty picture Charley thought it !

‘ Well, dearest,’ said she, as Charley advanced, ‘ have you had a pleasant evening ?’

‘ Yes, mother ; and, oh ! it was so delicious walking home through the woods. Uncle John wanted to send the carriage for Amy, I believe, but she would not have it.’

Mrs. Dayrell smiled.

‘ So the walk home was the pleasantest part of the evening, was it, dear ?’

‘ No, mother, I don’t say that : it was very nice altogether, and Amy enjoyed it almost as much as a party in London.’

‘ Dear child ! she is not at all spoiled by her first taste of gaiety ; and her devotion to Gertrude as great as ever, isn’t it, Charley ?’

‘ Oh, just the same, I think ; but who would not keep firm to Gerty ? she is so like a rock to lean upon—so strong and safe.’

‘ Come, Charley, not a very flattering simile

for your cousin, I think.' And Mrs. Charles did not look thoroughly comfortable at her son's last remark. 'But,' she added quickly, 'I wanted to say something to you, dearest, while it is fresh in my mind, because I think you would like to hear it. Your uncle has been telling me that he is very much satisfied with you, he has had such good reports of you, and you know, my boy, he looks upon you quite as his son.'

'Nobody could have filled a father's place to me as Uncle John has done,' said Charles, earnestly; 'but, further, than that, he is not an old man, and if Amy marries young, he may marry again; there's no saying.'

'Charley,' said his mother, impressively, 'I will repeat to you what he said to me this evening. After saying how much pleased he was with you, he added, "I quite look upon Charles as my heir. He is now twenty, and next year, when he comes of age, I shall present him to the tenantry as my heir, and I shall now, in compli-

ment to his steadiness, increase his allowance, and make it exactly what my eldest son's would have been if I had ever had one.'"

'It is very kind of him, mother.' But Charley, as he said this, looked at the carpet.

'It is, indeed, my boy ; but John does love you as his own son, and he does indeed hope to be able some day to look upon you really as his son.'

Charley could not pretend that this was absolute news to him, so, being candour itself, he could not affect surprise.

'I confess to you, dear,' his mother went on, 'that I am not so fond of first cousins marrying. I should be exceedingly sorry, for instance, if your affections had turned towards Gertrude. But we do both owe such a debt of gratitude to your dear uncle for his unvarying kindness to us both, from the moment of *my* marriage and from *your* birth, that I cannot but hope that you may be able to love your cousin, and that Amabel may reciprocate the feeling. I

speak openly to you, Charley, for I never could keep anything from you ; and don't despise us,' she added, playfully, 'for a couple of old match-making parents.'

Charley smiled affectionately at his mother.

'I don't quite know what to say to you, mother, but I don't suppose Amy cares a straw for me, if you mean that, though in former days she was my "little wife," and I don't think I am in love with her now.'

'Say no more about it now, my boy ; and Heaven forbid that you should ever be drawn into a marriage where there is no affection. Ar now good night.'

Perhaps, in this conversation, Mrs. Dayrell was not going the exact way to win her point ; but she knew Charley's character well : his ideas of gratitude and veneration were almost romantic, and he had always regarded his uncle with a devotion which amounted to idolatry. His mother, from whom he inherited his large

loving heart, not only had the same feeling for the grand, noble brother-in-law, on whom she was wholly dependent, but doted upon Amabel also, having been a mother to her ever since the death of Lady Kendal, which had occurred the year before that of her own husband. Everybody said, when poor Charles Dayrell died, what a charming arrangement it was that young Mrs. Charles should live with Lord Kendal entirely, and educate his motherless child. And, for once, everybody was right ; and some who pitied *her* for burying herself in the country with that stern man, and others who pitied *him*, ‘because, of course, Mrs. Dayrell would marry again directly,’ were soon in the minority, and were fain to hold their tongues. The *ménage* was perfect : the only thing Mrs. Charles could not bring herself to do was to live in London ; and accordingly, hitherto, when Lord Kendal went every year to town during the session for three or four months, Aunt Alice remained behind,

and Amabel accompanied her papa, for he never could bear to part with her. Her governess, of course, went with her ; but Lord Kendal always had his Amy opposite to him at the dinner table, and the lovely engaging little girl was petted by his friends who came to dine with him, and was altogether rather more spoiled and flattered than even her indulgent aunt would have quite approved. Gertrude had once or twice in her life paid them a visit at Kendal House, and it was now Amy's desire to carry her off and have her at the dance that Lord Kendal had been persuaded to give to celebrate his treasure's seventeenth birthday. Even Aunt Alice had been persuaded to break through her rules, and was to return with them to London.

As for Charley, I suspect he was tolerably heart-whole in those days, and his mother's conversation did not keep him long awake that night : the principal thought that occupied his mind was this :

‘ I wonder what put it into my mother’s head to say that about Gerty? And, after all, it is nonsense : one first cousin is as good as another.’

He might have added, like the Irishman, ‘ To be sure she is, and better.’

It was taken for granted that Gerty was to go to the ball ; of course she enjoyed the thoughts of it keenly.

William came into the sitting-room some days after, where Gertrude was superintending Reginald’s lessons, her mother not feeling equal to this her usual duty. Gerty and Reginald did not get on particularly well : the former felt hot and impatient, though she was outwardly endurance itself. Redgie was also very hot and very idle. After William’s entrance there was no hope of anything more being done, and Gertrude, with a sigh, wished her eldest brother farther off.

‘ I say, Gertrude, is this a fact that you and Sebastian are going to my uncle’s ball next week ?’

‘ Yes, William, I hope so.’

‘ Hum,’ said William, who would have liked to object, but could at the moment find no particular reason for doing so.

Reginald, meanwhile, had abandoned his lessons, and was jumping on his brother, who forthwith began a noisy game of romps with him, in the middle of which mamma came in.

‘ What’s all this ?’ she said. ‘ Why, Redgie, and you, William, stopping business !’

‘ I found Gertrude victimizing this unhappy boy, mother,’ said William, in the dry tone which always had the effect of irritating his sister.

Mamma only shook her head at her two darlings, her eldest and her youngest born, and told Gertrude that Redgie had done enough for to-day, and that, as William had come back, he might have a holiday. Gertrude was not sorry for herself, but thought it bad discipline ; and as for Reginald, he immediately attached himself

to his brother, who shortly found him so troublesome that he repented his interference, and thus Gertrude was avenged, only she did not know it. Those two were the most alike of the family in countenance and feature, but they were the most antagonistic in every other respect, and, as the saying is, never got on well together.

Meanwhile the sister betook herself to the drawing-room, and, seeing Sebastian under the great tree, she put on her hat, took out her sewing, and went to join him.

‘Who do you think is here, Gerty?’ said Sebastian, as she came up.

‘Mr. Chorley, I suppose, or Mr. Herbert,’ said Gertrude, languidly.

‘Not at all; a very different kind of being: who but Padre Cristoforo?’

‘Dr. Antony?’ said Gertrude; ‘in papa’s study?’

‘By no means,’ said Seb: ‘true to his principles, papa is discoursing with him out of

doors, and they are walking up and down the shrubbery.'

'Here comes papa. I suppose he is gone.'

Here Arthur called his daughter, and she ran across the lawn to meet him.

'Antony has been here,' he said, 'about that ward of mine : his other guardian is thinking of taking him away from here, which seems a pity, as he has been here so short a time. Antony wants me to interfere, but, under the circumstances, what can I do?'

'Could you remonstrate?' said Seb.

'I *could*, but it would be of no use. This gentleman is a Roman Catholic also, and would not be likely to attend to me. It is a pity, for Antony is a safe man for him to be with under the circumstances.'

'And he seemed so happy with Dr. Antony,' said Gertrude.

Sir Roswal Lismore had been over to Derley Moor once or twice since he had dined at the

rectory. Lord Kendal had seen him, and, falling in love, as everybody did, man, woman, and child, with his beautiful countenance, had asked him to dinner, and in the hospitality of his nature had sent him an invitation to the ball if he was likely to be in town at the time. Amabel observed the scarlet flush of delight that overspread the face of the unsophisticated lad at the thoughts of such happiness, and the spoiled beauty smiled to herself with a feeling of superiority to such emotions.

If the truth were known, Gertrude felt nearly as much excitement at the prospect as the young Lismore himself.

But there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, and so Gertrude was destined to find.

'My dear,' said Mrs. Arthur Dayrell to her daughter that evening, 'I want to say a little word to you.'

I wonder why it is that so simple and apparently innocent a preface always causes a heart-

sinking in the person to whom it is addressed ? Gertrude, accordingly, though possessing a conscience clear as the noon day, *felt* quite pale when her mother thus spoke, but she only said,

‘ Yes, mamma, certainly ;’ and then added mentally to herself, ‘ I suppose I have not devoted myself sufficiently to Redgie.’

‘ My dear child, should you be very much disappointed if you did not go to this ball ?’

‘ To the ball, mamma !’ answered Gerty, much surprised ; ‘ Uncle John’s ? Why, don’t you wish me to go ?’

‘ Well, dear, you know we are very unwilling to disappoint you, but your papa and I have our reasons for not wishing you to go out in London this year. You have been staying in town with your uncle before, certainly, but that was before Amy came out, and things were different. Now, I am not strong enough to go myself, and I don’t half like the notion of your first ball without me. William, too, says——’

‘ Oh, mamma !’ burst in Gertrude, and then stopped ; but she thought to herself, ‘ Then it is William who has spoiled all my pleasure ;’ but she only said, ‘ I beg pardon, mamma, but I don’t see exactly why William should interfere.’

‘ Well, never mind William,’ she said, smiling, ‘ it is to please your father and me that I am asking you to give up this pleasure, Gerty, dearest.’

‘ Dear mamma,’ said Gerty, rallying her good humour, and quite won by the gracious gentleness of her mother’s manner ; for Mrs. Dayrell was one of those gifted people who can do a disagreeable thing in such an agreeable manner that the sting of it is quite taken away. So it was that Gerty, though vexed and disappointed, submitted most cheerfully, and resolved to put the forbidden pleasure quite out of her head.

‘ Mamma, if you can’t spare me, that is quite sufficient,’ Gertrude said seriously and as if she meant it.

Mrs. Dayrell thereupon did *not* say, "My dear, that it is not at all the reason. I don't want you in the least, and could spare you perfectly.' She was not too proud to incur the semblance of an obligation even from her daughter ; she only said,

' My dearest, it is not very easy for me to spare you just now, for you are very useful to me ; at the same time, rather than deprive you of a pleasure, I would manage to do without you if I had not other reasons.'

' Very well, dear mamma, please don't say anything more about it. I don't care in the least ; and, after all, I should not know anybody. It would be a different thing if it was to be a ball at Dayrell Court, for instance, as I know all the people about here.'

So there was an end of it ; and Gertrude, as she sat herself by her father's side that evening and felt his caressing arm round her waist and listened to all his fond half droll remarks, won-

dered what amusement in the world was worth 'papa's' society. They did love one another, those two. William, as he stood looking at them, twisted his moustache, humphed, and reflected that Gertrude was amazingly spoilt. Sebastian, who knew what had passed, smiled to himself, and thought complacently that nobody had such a father and sister as he had.

The following day the family at Dayrell Court had just finished breakfast when Uncle Arthur came in to announce Gertrude's defection, and to apologize for his seeming strictness. Amoretta was greatly disappointed, and made every effort to shake his determination.

'Oh, Uncle Arthur!' she exclaimed, 'I never thought you were so severe. And poor Gerty, she never has any amusement. I wonder what you think of me?' she added, with a comical look of terror. 'How many balls have I been to, papa?' she said, turning to Lord Kendal.

'More than are good for you, I dare say, my

little woman,' said her uncle, kindly; 'but Gertrude and you are different people. However, far from condemning you young things for hoping about, I can tell you that I am very sorry to disappoint you both; so you must, like Gerty herself, believe that I have good reasons, and ask no questions.'

'Quite right, Arthur,' said Lord Kendal, gravely, 'and we won't press you. I must contrive some other amusement for my good Gerty. What do you say, Amy, to getting up a dance for her here in the winter? I dare say Lily can't spare her very well now. Isn't that it, Arthur?'

'Partly, John. Lily is far from strong just now; by and bye she will be better, we hope; but I have my reasons for not liking my girl to enter upon London gaieties without her mother, and I know that you will not mind, John.'

'Very well,' said Lord Kendal, quietly; 'then Gerty shall make her *début* here when Charley

comes of age, that is settled. Where is she this morning ?

“ She rode over quite early with Seb to see her friend Mrs. Burns, I believe.”

‘ I shall be jealous of Mrs. Burns,’ quoth Amy, as she ran off to acquaint Charley with the evil fate that had set in against them all in depriving them of Gerty’s society.

Meanwhile that young person was cantering along the lanes on her bonny bay, Seb on the black cob, when a turn of the road brought them alongside of Angel Lismore and his tutor taking an early walk. They pulled up, and Seb, dismounting, led his pony up the hill, and they all entered into conversation.

‘ I fear we shall not have many more walks together now,’ said Dr. Antony, as he placed his hand caressingly on the shoulder of his young charge ; ‘ Angel leaves me very soon.’

‘ Not willingly, father,’ said the boy, as he looked anxiously in the worn face of the priest.

‘You see, Miss Dayrell,’ said Antony, half smiling, ‘we tutors and guardians feel anxious when our pupils leave us for the great world; but Lord Kendal has been very kind in giving him the *entrée* to his house while he remains in London, which I trust will not be very long.’

‘Sir Denzil Everard means me to go abroad, does he not, father?’

‘You will enjoy that,’ said Sebastian, kindly.

‘Oh, yes,’ said the boy; and, as he and Sebastian fell a little behind the others, he added, ‘and if only Dr. Antony would come with me, as my other guardian, Sir Denzil, wishes, I should be quite happy, but I am afraid he will not. I am going to study at Munich, I think, and then I am going to Rome.’

Meanwhile Gertrude felt sorry for Dr. Antony, but did not quite know how to express it.

‘Sir Roswal has never been at a public school, I think?’ she observed, and then felt as if she had said a foolish thing.

‘No,’ sighed the priest; ‘my boy has never thought an unworthy thought; he has hitherto been kept from the pollution of the world; would that he could be shielded from it for ever!’

‘Does he go to Sir Denzil Everard’s house while he is in town?’ said Gertrude.

‘Yes, but I hope he will go to Munich soon. Your father quite concurs with me in thinking it desirable. Meanwhile, Miss Dayrell, I must recommend him to the kindness of your brother and cousin. I can trust your father’s and uncle’s training.’

Gertrude could only answer for Charley and William’s kind intentions, and asked Dr. Antony if he meant to remain at the Red House.

‘I think not. I shall most likely take up my residence in London, where I shall always find plenty of employment.—I think your brother is intended for the Church, Miss Dayrell?’

‘Yes, I believe Sebastian wishes to follow
—’s profession.’

‘He could not have a better guide or example than Arthur Dayrell,’ said Dr. Antony ; ‘but I see your brother is mounting his pony, so Angel and I will, with your permission, take our leave.’

Gertrude bent down from her horse to shake hands with Dr. Antony, who looked as if he would have liked to bestow a priestly benediction as, with a kindly smile on his wan features, he returned her friendly pressure. And they parted.

‘I am sorry for poor Dr. Antony,’ said Gertrude ; ‘he seems so fond of his pupil. He was with him, I suppose, long before they came here ?’

But Sebastian was not listening apparently, for he only observed, after a meditative pause,

‘I wonder what that young fellow will turn out ? He is too good now—as innocent as a baby. It will be a perfect marvel if he does not do something very foolish as soon as he has the opportunity.’

‘ Run away with Amy, perhaps, from under Charley’s nose !’ said Gertrude, laughing. ‘ Is that what you mean, Seb ?’

‘ Stuff, child. Now come, no more dawdling. Time is getting on, and you know you have got Mrs. Burns and all the little Burnses to see.’





CHAPTER V.

LONDON LIFE.

KENDAL HOUSE was very unlike an ordinary commonplace London house. It was, in fact, very old, having been built by a Lord Kendal who flourished in the reign of Charles II., and who, being a person of unimpeachable morals, did not therefore enjoy the favour or confidence of his sovereign. This did not, however, apparently cause him either distress or uneasiness. He spent his life chiefly in collecting pictures, and a very beautiful and rare collection he made, which was added to from time to time by his successors. The house fronted the park, and enjoyed, therefore, a cheerful look-out. The entrance, which was on the north side, led the visitor into a rather

disproportionately small front hall, from which he ascended by a wide staircase carpeted with crimson, and found himself at once in the picture gallery, at one end of which was situated the principal drawing-room ; on the right of that again lay the anteroom and the dining-room. A *dérobé* door led from the drawing-room on the left, down a small flight of stairs, into what were once the private apartments of Lord and Lady Kendal, now inhabited by Lord Kendal, who slept in his large roomy dressing-room, while Amy occupied the bed-room and the prettily furnished sitting-room adjoining.

The remainder of the house I need not particularly describe. It possessed the comforts as well as the discomforts inseparable from old houses, which, with all their faults, are generally speaking far superior to those which are run up so rapidly and unsubstantially in the present day. To my mind they are an additional testimony to what I believe is a great truth, that the day of

the world's death is nigh at hand. In former days men built for posterity: the architect's name is forgotten, or was never known, but his works remain in imperishable glory. We do not believe that we shall have a posterity, we build our dwelling-houses for ourselves alone, and of such fragile materials that it is well if they last a single lifetime.

But Kendal House had seen its best days even now; and two or three generations had grown up under its roof. Little feet had trod daintily the slippery parquet floors of the galleries, and their owners had played at hide-and-seek behind the marble pillars that stood at the farther end, where the great Vandyke of the Holy Family hung. Lord Kendal and his brothers had often acted charades at this end of the gallery, the pillars made such a good proscenium, and the side door on to the back staircase such a capital exit. Lord Kendal's friends often talked of the *tableaux* that were represented there not long

after his marriage, when Lady Kendal looked so beautiful as Olivia, and the twin brothers, Charles and Arthur, then boys of sixteen, personated Sebastian and Viola with such admirable success.

Amy had often heard of these *tableaux*, and her great ambition was to have a repetition of them some day.

She was sitting in the drawing-room some days after their return from Dayrell Court. The room was rather hot from the western sun being upon it, but it had a great air of luxury about it; and the prettiest little tea-tray possible, with tiny tea-pot and appurtenances, was on a low table by the maiden's side. Amy looked rather out of humour, as if she had found a crumpled rose-leaf somewhere amongst her cushions of eider-down.

The door opened, and a bright face looked in. Amy raised herself slightly from the depths of her low seat, and said,

‘Here I am, Charley, buried in an arm-chair.’

‘Hallo,’ said the individual addressed, ‘you are buried, indeed! I thought there was nothing but a heap of gauze or muslin there, and, lo, there’s a cousin inside it. Where’s my mother?’

‘Gone to a mothers’ meeting, I think.’

‘Very appropriate and proper; and what have you been doing?’

‘Driving with papa. I left him at the House of Lords, and then came home. I am tired.’

‘Tired! of what?’

‘Nothing.’

‘Then come and take a turn in the gallery—it is rather cool there. It is a bore they would not let Gerty come, isn’t it?’ he added, as they sauntered up and down.

‘Yes: I can’t think why Aunt Lily wouldn’t let her. I have told papa that I don’t care about having the ball now: the invitations have not been sent out, luckily. And I will tell you what, Charley: I had such a capital plan in my

head, for which I wanted Gerty quite desperately.'

'And what was that?'

'Why, you know I am dying to have some theatricals or *tableaux* here, and you know how well Gertrude acts charades?'

'First rate,' interpolated Charles.

'Well, isn't it vexatious that they would not let her come?'

'Before I answer that query, I have something to propound. Supposing they had let her come, and had said, "She is not to act;" what should you have said then?'

'Oh, they wouldn't have said that.'

'Oh, wouldn't they though! Oh, no! not at all! I think not, certainly! And what is more,' he continued, suddenly changing his bantering tone to one of great solemnity, 'I should not have allowed it either.'

'As if anybody would have asked your leave,' said Amy, laughing. 'Why, don't you re-

member our acting "Cinderella" in this very gallery, and what capital actors you and Seb made? William was atrocious, and so cross besides. That was a regular play, too, and papa was delighted.'

'I remember you made a capital Cinderella; and Uncle Arthur as Cinderella's papa—do you remember? Wasn't he capital? I declare it is a talent thrown away. I can see it all now: Uncle Arthur acting *at* Uncle John, who I thought would really have been taken ill on the spot, he laughed so much. But my dear Amy,' said Charley, suddenly stopping the flow of his reminiscences, 'that was merely a child's thing, and I suppose you mean to have all London to see this.'

'Well, and where's the harm?'

'Oh, none in the world; only I dare say *le cher oncle* would not consider it altogether the thing for Gertrude to figure away before a vast assembly; but I know nothing about it, and am

always, as you know, the most obedient of your ladyship's slaves,' concluded Charley, making his cousin a grotesque bow, and then suddenly catching hold of her, waltzed her all round the gallery to the music of his own whistling.

'Now, Charley, just be quiet,' said Amy, as she sank breathless on a sofa; 'I think I hear some one coming upstairs too.'

The gallery door opened, and Watson, suddenly discovering Lady Amabel, announced deferentially,

'Sir Roswal Lismore, my lady.'

'Mrs. Dayrell is not at home, Watson,' Amy had only just time to say when Angel walked in, *feeling* the strongest possible desire that the floor would open at once, and let him through gently into the hall, that he might instantly make his escape, but merely *looking* unusually handsome in consequence, being one of those fortunate people who cannot look awkward in whatever circumstances they are placed.

Amabel, however, saw he was shy, and jumping up, said,

‘I am afraid my aunt is not at home, Sir Roswal, but pray come in, if you will put up with Charley and me. Perhaps you will have some tea?’ she added, leading the way to the drawing-room. ‘Just see if it is still there, Charley.’

Angel declined tea, however; and when they had reached the drawing-room, and sat down very decorously, a pause ensued. Amy was silent, because she was thinking what an acquisition Philammon would be in a *tableau*, and the subject of her meditations was looking furtively round from under his long black eyelashes, as if he expected to see some one else.

‘I hope Miss Dayrell is well,’ he said at length, when he began to discover that it was time to say something.

‘Oh, very well, thank you,’ said Amy: ‘she is not here, I am sorry to say.’

‘Isn’t she coming soon, then, Lady Amabel?’

‘No, alas! not at present; my uncle and aunt cannot spare her very well just now. It is a great disappointment to *me*,’ Amy added, emphasizing the *me*, as if any one who could have the heart to thwart her must indeed be lost to all sense of propriety and good feeling.

Sir Roswal looked very blank and disappointed, and murmured something that nobody could hear.

‘Where are you staying, Lismore?’ asked Charley.

‘At Sir Denzil Everard’s. I believe I am going abroad soon, but we are waiting to see if Dr. Antony can be persuaded to go with me. He is just come to London, and is staying at the Oratory now.’

‘I suppose you are glad that he is come to town?’ said Amy.

‘Oh, yes,’ said the boy, simply.

‘Would you like to look at the pictures? Charley will show them to you,’ said Amy,

seeing that her visitor thought it was time for him to take his leave, but did not know how to get away.

‘Oh, I should indeed,’ said Sir Roswal, with a look of pleasure; ‘but I need not trouble Mr. Dayrell, if I may be allowed to walk through the gallery. There was one Miss Dayrell mentioned to me, a Guido, I think, that I should like to see very much.’

‘You will hardly see that well now, I think, it is too dark. Charley, just show Sir Roswal the picture of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, will you? if there is not light enough, he must come earlier another day.—Any day but Tuesday,’ she continued to Sir Roswal: ‘Tuesdays are public days, and very tiresome they are, for one can’t escape the public here—all the rooms communicate with the gallery.’

She held out her hand to the bashful boy, who thought her excessively pretty as she moved lightly away, her draperies floating airily about

her as she smiled her farewell and disappeared through the side door into her own regions.

The early Mass had been said at one of the Roman Catholic chapels in the west end of London. The officiating priest had taken off his vestments, and emerged through the carved portal, the odour of the incense hanging about him still.

‘Good morning, Angel,’ he said to a youth who had evidently been waiting for him; ‘will you come home and breakfast with me?’

‘With the greatest pleasure, father,’ said Angel.

And the two walked together through the quiet streets to the modest apartment where Dr. Antony always took up his quarters while he lived in London, and which belonged to the religious house where dwelt the brethren of the Oratory. It was a pleasant, sunny little room, very neatly kept, and crammed perfectly full of books. They had overflowed all the bookcases and nearly covered the floor.

‘What a nice little room, father,’ said Angel, as he looked round; ‘it is not the same you had before, I think?’

‘No, my boy: it belonged to Dr. Melville; but he is now at Rome, so I have succeeded to his apartment. If you go to Rome I must give you letters to him, Angel.’

‘Is it quite impossible for you to come, father?’

‘Quite, I am afraid, my Angel, much as I should have enjoyed it. And now tell me what has Sir Denzil arranged about you?’

‘I believe I am to wait till my cousin Kenelm is ready to go to Germany; Sir Denzil thinks it will be best for me to go with him.’

‘I see no objection; Kenelm is not like his eldest brother. I should grieve if you were to become intimate with Guy Everard; he is unsatisfactory in all ways, I fear.’

‘I am very glad you approve, father; for Sir Denzil says that Mr. Dayrell will consent to any arrangement that you sanction.’

‘I shall hope not to disappoint Arthur’s confidence,’ said Antony, with a sigh. ‘But now, Angel,’ he added cheerfully, ‘tell me what you have been doing. Have you called at Kendal House yet?’

‘Yes, two days ago: what a beautiful house! and what pictures! Glorious! Such Guidos, father, and Fra Angelicos! But I am to go again and see them.’

‘Was Miss Dayrell there?’ said Antony, watching him keenly.

‘No,’ said Angel, and his countenance fell slightly; ‘and Lady Amabel did not seem to expect her.’

‘Miss Dayrell is a beautiful girl; her cousin I do not know. Do you admire her?’ he continued in his soft equable voice.

‘Oh, yes. Lady Amabel is very pretty, and she was very kind in her manner; for I was very shy, father. She and young Mr. Dayrell were at home, no one else.’

‘I am told that there exists a sort of family arrangement by which Lady Amabel will marry her cousin, Mr. Charles Dayrell.’

‘I should not be surprised, father.’

Dr. Antony was satisfied that it could do Angel no harm at present to frequent Kendal House, with watchfulness on his part—that careful watchfulness which a Roman Catholic priest feels it his duty to exercise over those whom he considers in any way under his charge. He regretted that the young man did not go abroad at once, and continue his studies, but meanwhile he considered that he was in safe hands. Lady Everard was his mother’s half-sister, and had married Sir Denzil, the representative of a good old Roman Catholic family. She had several daughters, most of them older than Angel; but the youngest, Viviana, who was only fifteen, was a lovely child, and quite suitable in age to Sir Roswal Lismore. The second son, Kenelm, was a quiet, studious youth, originally intended for

the priesthood, towards which he had a strong vocation. This, however, had been discouraged of late, for the eldest son, Guy, was turning out badly—led a wild, dissipated, irreligious life, which had already begun to prey upon his health—and showed no disposition to marry. There was therefore at present a probability that Kenelm might succeed to the family honours and estates.

Angel had occasionally seen his cousins during their childhood, but he was not intimate with them, having, as I have before mentioned, led the most secluded life that it was possible a boy could lead. At present his one strong devotion was to his tutor and friend, Dr. Antony; but his ductile mind was just in the state to receive new impressions. He gazed about him in silent wonder, in this new world in which he found himself, with those great liquid eyes of his, keeping to himself all that puzzled and surprised him, to be confided afterwards to his spiritual guide and friend. He told Dr. Antony with delight

that he was invited to a party at Kendal House, and promised faithfully to come and 'tell him all about it;' and having unconsciously laid bare every thought of his heart to him in the conversation that followed, he took his leave and departed, causing many a passer-by to stop and look at him and wonder at the matchless beauty of which he seemed so unconscious.

The idea of the *tableaux* once having entered Amy's mind, she was not likely to relinquish it again in a hurry, and she took an early opportunity of sounding her aunt upon the subject.

'Auntie,' she began, one evening as they sat on the terrace in front of the house, where carpets and chairs were placed every warm evening after dinner, and very often the lamp also, 'do you remember the *tableaux* there were here once upon a time?'

'Yes, perfectly, my love; they were exceedingly pretty. I was taken to see them as a great favour, for I was a mere child then.'

‘What fun it would be to get up some *tableaux* or theatricals here! for I don’t mean to have the ball this year, as Gerty can’t come to it. I am sure papa would like *tableaux* much better too; wouldn’t you, papa dear?’

‘What, act in the gallery? Who is to act, you little puss? You and Charley, for our diversion?’

‘Not me,’ replied Charley, ungrammatically as well as tersely; ‘I bar that.’

‘Why, you can stand still in a *tableau*, can’t you, Charley?’

‘Can *you*? I bet you anything you can’t, Amy. I can see you shaking and giggling all the time.’

‘Thank you, Charles,’ replied Amy, with dignity. ‘I am sorry you think I am quite an idiot. I am sure there are plenty of people who would act, and anybody who is moderately good-looking would do in a *tableau*.’

‘Sir Roswal Lismore for instance,’ said Charley, mischievously.

‘He is not moderately good-looking—he is excessively handsome,’ said Amy, with spirit; ‘ten times better looking than you are, Charley.’

Charley rose instantly and made her a low bow, as if he had received a compliment.

‘I know,’ he said, ‘what we will have. A scene out of “Hypatia”—Philammon imploring Hypatia not to go to the lecture-room and meet her death.’

‘I never read it,’ said Amy, ‘and I don’t believe anybody would know what it was meant for. You are always talking about Philammon, and I am sure I don’t know what you allude to.’

‘I dare say not: besides,’ he added to himself, ‘we have no Hypatia, as Gertrude is not here.’

Here Lord Kendal raised his voice again, but this time it was merely to request that whatever play they selected, it would not be ‘Lovers’ Vows;’ a remark which elicited a laugh from Amy and her aunt, who had read ‘Mansfield Park,’ and fully appreciated the drollery of the

situation where the owner of the house returns and finds his *sanctum* invaded, and Mr. Yates ranting in his library; but Charley, who was not equally well read in his Miss Austen, asked innocently if it was an improper play.

‘I suppose there was not such a thing as a proper play for private representation in Miss Austen’s time, or else she would not have commented so severely upon private theatricals,’ said Lord Kendal.

‘But our play shall be strictly proper,’ said Amy, coaxingly, as she hung over his chair and stroked his thin grey hair.

He smiled lovingly at her, and Amy knew she would have her way.

‘If you do act anything, let it be a series of *tableaux* out of Walter Scott’s novels; it will be improving as well as entertaining, for it seems to me that those novels are very much neglected in the present day. I am told that you young people won’t read Sir Walter Scott now.’

‘I think there is nothing like them,’ said Charley; ‘you wont find *me* depreciating them, Uncle John. Do you remember how you and Uncle Arthur read “Old Mortality” to Gerty and Sebastian and me that year that we all went to the sea-side together? How crazy we all three were over it!’

‘The only historical novels I know that are comparable to Walter Scott’s are the “Last Days of Pompeii” and the “Last of the Barons,”’ observed Mrs. Dayrell.

‘The “Last of the Barons” is a fine piece of writing, and the contrast between the characters of the Duke of Gloucester and the Earl of Warwick, the man of mind and the man of might, is wonderfully drawn. That description of the young Richard III. is a perfect masterpiece.’

‘I think we could have some good *tableaux* out of “Old Mortality,”’ said Charley, who had been pondering. ‘Lismore would make a good

Claverhouse, wouldn't he, Amy ?—"A face such as limners love to paint and ladies to look upon."

'Cruel man !' said Amy.

'Oh, you have studied Wodrow, I suppose ?' said Charley, composedly.

'Who was he ?' asked Amy.

'Macaulay's authority for slandering "the great Dundee." However, Amy, as Macaulay is the only historian you ever will read, because you say his writings are "so like a novel," I won't shake your faith in him.'

'Charley haranguing as usual about some of his historical predilections, I suppose,' said another voice, and William, who always lived at Kendal House when business or pleasure called him to London, stepped out on to the terrace.

'Had a pleasant dinner, Willy ?' said Amy.

'Not very,' replied William, whose answers were generally curt.

'Then come and consult about *tableaux* directly ; we are going to have some here. You

shall be Henry Morton, I think, and Charley here shall be Evandale.'

'If you will promise to be Edith Bellenden,' said William, who was always gracious to Amy. 'Are you going to act scenes out of "Old Mortality"?''

'Only *tableaux*—no speaking.'

'Did you hear anything about the new gun at Woolwich, William?' his uncle here broke in; and the conversation turned upon military matters, in which William was always at home; and the ladies soon becoming wearied of the discussion, discovered that it was bed-time, and adjourned their own important matter till the morrow.

There was a dinner party the following day at Kendal House, at which Sir Roswal Lismore dined; and Lady Amabel took an early opportunity after dinner to explain the plan to the young man and ask his assistance. He consented at once delightedly when he heard what he was

required to do, and Amy declared she would ask a cousin of her father's, Lady Mansergh, to aid them with her advice. 'They are always having acting at their home in Lancashire, and I am sure Lady Mansergh would help.'

Then there ensued an animated discussion upon scenes, pictures, and subjects, to which Charley listened without joining much in it, and when appealed to by Amy, only said that he would willingly be of use, but begged to be excused from any participation in choosing subjects for representation.

It was finally settled that a meeting should be held the following day at the five o'clock tea, to decide upon the scenes, and that Lady Mansergh should be invited to give her co-operation and assistance, together with a select circle of distinguished persons, who, it was supposed (by Amy and Sir Roswal), would vie with one another for the honour of acting in the *tableaux* at Kendal House.

There was no doubt about the pleasure that one of the party looked forward to ; but life at this particular moment seemed a kind of fairy-land to Roswal Lismore, who had suddenly discovered that Lady Amabel was the prettiest and most winning creature he had ever seen, and that her manners were perfect ; she did not treat him like a boy, as his cousins the Misses Everard did. He only hoped that the *tableaux* would take place before Kenelm Everard was ready to start for the continent, because it was quite impossible that he should disappoint Lady Amabel.





CHAPTER VI.

THE TABLEAUX.

AMY was a very affectionate little thing ; she had winning ways, and a soft little voice ; she was slender, small, and pretty. She was so pertinacious when she wanted anything that very few people could refuse her whatever she had set her heart upon. She had a passion for pets of all sorts, but had a habit of getting tired of them at the end of every six months on an average. Her last new pet was Sir Roswal Lismore, and she fondled him much as she had done all the others, canine or ornithological. But self-pleasing was the real mainspring of all Amy's actions, though her selfishness assumed, generally speaking, such a winning form, that she was not very likely to

discover its existence. The only person who ever spoke plainly to her was Charley ; and he was never troubled by any scruples, but would say straight out just what he thought, and leave her to digest it. He never made any impression : the child lived in an atmosphere of adulation which made her impervious to her cousin's friendly hints, and she never took any further notice of them than to say, 'How dreadfully cross you are this evening, Charley !' and then dismissed the subject from her mind altogether.

'Spoilt, capricious little thing,' said Charles one day to his mother, when the rehearsals for the *tableaux* had been going on with great vigour. 'I shall run down to Derley as soon as I can, and refresh myself with a talk with Gertrude. I am glad there is no question of her coming up for these things ; though I think they will be good too,' he added, with his usual candour.

'Do you object to Amy performing, dearest ?' said his mother.

‘Oh, of course it is no business of mine to object; but it is not a very pleasant thing to see one’s future wife flirting away in that amazing fashion. He may be an “Angel,” but he is a very young one.’

Mrs. Dayrell was never quick at catching an allusion; it was therefore necessary to explain to her that Charley was accusing Amy of encouraging very marked attentions on the part of Sir Roswal Lismore.

Having taken this in, Mrs. Charles hoped it might be an indication of jealousy on her son’s part, and hastened to defend Amy.

‘You should not say so, Charles. Amy looks upon him quite as a boy—nothing more, and is kind to him, that is all.’

‘Too kind by half,’ muttered Charley. ‘Only I just advise you to keep your eyes open, mother.’

‘My dear, prudent boy, I will,’ said Mrs. Dayrell, laughing as she kissed him affection-

ately and smoothed down his mental plumes, which had evidently been ruffled by something, though she could not tell what exactly.

The truth is that the boy had very strong and decided notions upon what he considered proper and right, and a taste that was easily shocked or offended by any departure from his high standard; and he disapproved, in his youthful severity, of the tone that these theatricals had introduced into Kendal House. How William could like to see Amabel, for whom he was supposed to entertain a calm attachment, absorbed in the eternal conferences that were always taking place between her and Sir Roswal, he could not understand; while his mother, who did occasionally notice his uneasiness, attributed it to the wrong cause, and hoped that his affection for Amy might be developing itself; a hope which was an entire delusion.

Meanwhile the preparations proceeded swimmingly, and nothing was thought of but scenes,

dressess, swords, and other theatrical 'properties,' and Amy seriously entertained the notion of enlisting Dr. Antony himself, and inducing him to personate Padre Cristoforo receiving the *pane del perdono* from the man whose brother he had slain. But Charley laughed at her so much that she actually gave up the idea.

Rehearsing was absolutely necessary, that the performers might know how to place themselves, and that there might be no hitch in the order of the performances, which really promised to be very pretty; and Charley, who, in spite of his grumbling, was very good natured and useful to his wilful cousin, was standing in the gallery one afternoon, talking to Watson about some of the arrangements for the lighting, when 'Mr. Sebastian Dayrell' was announced.

'Hallo, Seb!' said Charley, 'I am very glad to see you. Are you come to see our dress rehearsal? it takes place to-night. You have not brought Gertrude, have you?'

‘No ; I can only stay one night, as I am on my way to Oxford, and it would not have been worth while for Gerty to have come for so short a time.’

‘Amy will be delighted to see you ; she looks upon every human being in the light of an actor now.’

‘Uncle John will not mind my coming, I know,’ said Seb ; ‘for he wrote to my father the other day to say that I was to sleep here if I came to town ; so I am come for a night, really at my father’s wish. I did not know I should come in for your dress rehearsal.’

‘What does Uncle Arthur want ? Anything I can do ?’

‘Well, I don’t know ; but if you are not busy I should like to have a talk with you.’

When young men have anything to say to one another in London, they always take a walk, and, I believe, hold their conferences in the most crowded part of Hyde Park ; at all

events, Charley suggested to his cousin to come out, and the two sauntered into the Green Park, along the grass, and so into Hyde Park, and to what is called the unfrequented side of Rotten Row. Before they started, however, Sebastian put a letter into Charley's hand, saying,

‘There, my father got that this morning, and he thought I might as well just ask you or my aunt what it is all about, and whether it signifies really.’

The letter was as follows :

‘My dear Arthur,—I think it is right to tell you, as you are one of the guardians to Sir Roswal Lismore, that it is very desirable that you should urge his departure for the continent, which has been delayed much longer than is necessary. Loving the boy as I do, I have several causes of anxiety on his account; more especially as his visits to me have become very rare now, and though he is by way of reading,

with me occasionally, I very seldom see him. I do not approve of the companionship of Guy Everard, Sir Denzil's eldest son, for him, and I don't know whether *you* would quite approve of his passing his whole time in the society of Lady Amabel, your niece—on her account, I mean. Sir Denzil tells me that Angel's whole heart is set upon remaining for some amusement which is to take place at Kendal House ; but I am afraid that Kenelm Everard is unwilling to wait so long for him. This I regret, as I consider Angel too young as yet for a plunge into the London world. I trust, therefore, that you will recommend his following his companions in travel as soon as this attraction at Kendal House is over.

‘Ever yours sincerely,

‘MAURICE ANTONY.’

Charley, having read this letter, laughed, and taking his cousin's arm, said, as they left the house,

‘And what does Uncle Arthur say?’

‘Well, he just asked me to try and find out from you, if you or my aunt think there is anything of a serious flirtation going on between him and Amy, for that would not be quite desirable, I suppose.’

‘Well, I really don’t know: he is always here, and he is always looking at her with his sentimental eyes; but I don’t think it has got any further than a respectful kind of distant adoration on his part, which Amy finds agreeable, I suppose. But I agree that he is too young and simple for London life and the society of Guy Everard combined; and if he can be made to go off to his studies at Munich, it will be a very good thing.’

‘I suppose he is dreadfully green?’ said Sebastian.

‘Oh, yes, and has been so oddly brought up. You will see him to-night in two or three characters: one of them, out of “Thalaba,”

where he cannot tear himself from Oneiza, is rather suitable to the occasion, I think.'

'I thought he was much more struck with Gertrude the night that he dined with us in the country; he hardly looked at Amy.'

'Yes,' said Charley, gravely; 'but it was rather an admiration mingled with awe; and Gerty herself, I expect, would hardly look at him a second time, except, perhaps, to say a kind word, if the occasion required it. Now, as for Amy, it is very different; all is fish that comes to her net, and if she were to take the trouble to bewitch Lismore, the boy would have but very little chance, poor fellow.'

'Well,' said Sebastian, resignedly, 'I don't see that there is anything to be done; he won't propose before the twenty-third, I dare say, and after that he will be gone, and there will be an end of him for the present. What does Uncle John say to it all?'

'Uncle John is not troubled by the slightest

uneasiness, and laughs at my mother's hints. He looks upon us all as babies together, enjoying a game of play with our *tableaux*, and telling Amy not to break any hearts, gives her a kiss, and is shortly absorbed in the "Times," or the "Saturday Review," as the case may be.'

'Well, I am all for his going soon to Germany,' said Sebastian, after a pause, and with a comical expression.

The cousins having arrived at this conclusion, sauntered about the park for a time, till they found it was nearly time to turn homewards—as Charley was a perfect slave to Amy at this time, and declared that he had not a moment he could call his own.

Sebastian snatched a few minutes after dinner to write to his father. In the course of his letter, he said, 'Charley has been killing me with his account of all that has been going on here; his description of the performers in these *tableaux*, the jealousies of some, and the earnest-

ness of others, would amuse you vastly ; he can always see the comic side of a thing, while he is so thoroughly genial and kindly, that he never laughs ill-naturedly at anybody. I think, however, from what he tells me, that Amy is coming it rather strong with young Lismore, and I wonder my uncle does not see it. I shall be able to judge to-night, when the dress rehearsal takes place, of which I will send you an account to-morrow. I need hardly mention to you that Amy has endeavoured to enlist me in her *corps dramatique*. If I am very much wanted, I can come back from Oxford for that night.'

Only a few select friends were invited to see the dress rehearsal, which was a highly-important affair ; and the moment dinner was over the actors vanished to superintend the preparations and put on their dresses. Most of the performers had come to dinner—but I must be careful how I describe them too closely, for most of them were personages well known in the great world

of London at the remote period of which I write. But we live fast in these days, so fast that seven or eight years ago is quite a cycle of ages, ancient history, in fact, which nobody can possibly be expected to remember. There was, then, the old friend of the family, Mr. Sidney, who 'understood so well about all these kind of things,' and 'would tell them about the lighting,' and scold them if they assumed ungraceful attitudes, and generally assume the command of them all, because he was such an authority. There was Mr. Fayleigh, the clever young painter, who had good-naturedly undertaken to paint their scenery for them, and was of great assistance also in the grouping and arranging the dresses. There was Colonel Hardy, William's friend, and in the same regiment with him, who had been pressed into the service to act the ferocious parts, and look stern and savage as a mailed knight.

There were Lord and Lady Epping, a young

couple: she handsome, and rather in the style of Gertrude; he was the eldest son of the Earl of Waltham, a fair, tall young man, and an excellent amateur actor, whose talents were rather thrown away on this occasion, but who, being intimate with the family, had good-naturedly consented to assist. He was an old school and college friend of Sebastian's, though rather his senior; and his genuine delight at seeing him again threatened to endanger the tempers of some of the actors, for whenever 'Epping' was wanted, he was sure to be in the deserted drawing-room, in eager conversation with Seb, and had to be dragged away, in obedience to imperious messages from Amy.

There was Lady Mansergh of course, the life and soul of the proceedings; and, besides our friends, various supernumeraries, selected, some because they were good looking, others because they expected to be asked and would be affronted if they were not.

The selection of subjects had been made without reference to anything in particular, till some inventive genius suggested that they should call them an embodiment of all the virtues and all the vices, and would therefore, as the same individual wittily remarked, convey a highly instructive moral, and, indeed, resemble thereby some of the mystery-plays of the middle ages.

This brilliant idea was accordingly adopted. And behold, then, the curtain draws back and displays a Roman scene, where a handsome young matron, looking proudly down on two beautiful children nestling at her side, seems to say to the lady who is seated at the table holding forth, as if to challenge her admiration, a splendid string of pearls, 'Behold, these are my jewels.'

The light is well managed, and falls prettily on the creamy complexion and the soft white cashmere robe of Lady Epping, who, as Cornelia, looks lovingly on Lady Mansergh's pretty, curly-

headed little girls, in their short white tunics, and bare sandalled feet, while Lady Mansergh does not seem altogether sure that a fine pearl necklace is not worth a family of troublesome children, and Lady Epping would gladly give all the pearls she ever has had or is likely to possess to feel round her neck the clasp of two small arms that she could call her own.

‘Very pretty,’ pronounced Lord Kendal to Amy as she hung over him, ‘but I thought they were all to be out of Walter Scott.’

‘Not quite all, papa—most of them. This is “Patriotism.”’

‘Oh, indeed! that is another matter; and what do we have next?’

‘Three times, papa, for each,’ explained Amy, as the curtain rose and fell once and again, and the usual pause ensued—generally so interminable on these occasions—before the next *tableau* was introduced. At last it rises again, and now for Sir Walter Scott. Behold, then,

‘Jealousy,’ represented by the injured Master of Ravenswood, who finds that his faithless lady-love has just signed, with trembling fingers, the fatal contract with Bucklaw. William stood there, very handsome and sombre-looking, as the betrayed lover; Sir Roswal, looking young for the character, as Sholto Ashton; Charley, always ready to take the parts that no one else liked, as Bucklaw; and a young brother of Lord Epping’s as Henry Ashton. Lady Mansergh, who was only forty, considered herself too young for the part of Lady Ashton, which was therefore filled by Lady Epping, who was very well *made up* for the character; but nothing could look more perfect than Amy, with all her golden hair falling on her shoulders and her blue eyes cast down, as the lovely and wretched Lucy Ashton.

Only very near spectators could detect that Colonel Ashton every now and then forgot to glare angrily at Edgar Ravenswood, as was his bounden duty, in order to cast sidelong glances

at the fair Lucy ; perhaps Ravenswood himself was aware of the fact, and, therefore, found no difficulty in scowling *con amore*. Sebastian, who was behind the scenes figuratively if not literally, could not help being much amused by the by-play that went on.

Not to make my descriptions tedious, I will merely relate that the remaining *tableaux* were as follows :

A scene from 'Thalaba.'

'Rowena unveiling herself to gratify Rebecca with a sight of her beauty.'

'Henry Morton in the hands of Ephraim Macbriar and Habakkuk Mucklewrath.'

This was highly effective. Charley, as Henry Morton, beautifully dressed, and in the attitude of intense listening; William and Colonel Hardy on either side, as the zealots ready for the signal to perform execution; the rest watch in breathless excitement the wild figure, who, standing on a table, is about to advance the hands of the clock,

and quicken the hour of Morton's doom. Meanwhile they are all too absorbed to see that Claverhouse (Sir Roswal Lismore) stands in the doorway, his drawn sword in his hand, his head a little turned away, as he seems to beckon on his followers outside.

The light was so managed that it fell on the principal figures in sharp relief, and their picturesque dresses, of the reign of Charles II., the scarlet of the Royal Life Guards, and the flashing of the bright corslets, were all most effective, and drew down thunders of applause.

'Very good indeed,' was the observation of Lord Kendal, as the curtain descended the third time, and he murmured to himself, "It is the galloping of horse," said Morton; "God grant they come as my deliverers."

This was succeeded by a scene out of 'The Abbot,' where William, as the Earl of Ruthven, seized the wrist of Mary Queen of Scots (Amy again), to compel her to sign her abdication, and

Sir Roswal Lismore had all Roland Græme's devotion depicted in his countenance as he stood by the chair of the fallen queen.

Another pause, and the last *tableau*, called 'Love and Victory,' is now ready.

Once more the curtain rises on a youth and maiden, in the costume of Watteau's pictures, playing at chess. She looks intently at the board, while he gazes wistfully into her face. And the curtain falls. It rises again, and she sits upright, looking this time with surprise at the chess-board, while the youth, who has risen to his feet, has placed his fingers on the red queen, and seems to say, 'Checkmate.' Once more the curtain falls and rises again, but now he is kneeling at the maiden's feet, and her consenting hand is clasped in his.

'Well done! how naturally they do it!' says the amused voice of Mr. Sidney, as 'mid loud applause the curtain falls. But as it is in the act of falling a slight hitch occurs, and the

spectators have time to see a servant intrude himself on the stage with the words, 'A note for Sir Roswal Lismore,' and to see, moreover, the undignified haste with which the young gentleman started from his picturesque attitude, while the young lady fled in her hoop and powder, to be congratulated and made much of by the audience.

It was agreed on all hands that nothing could be more successful than the dress rehearsal, and the actors were loudly called for, when Mr. Sidney and Mr. Fayleigh, who had been behind the scenes to fetch them, came back, the former with a ludicrous expression of dismay on his face.

'Such a business!' he said: 'here they come to tell you all about it. Come, Hardy, break it to them.'

Thus adjured, Colonel Hardy informed the company that Sir Roswal's note was from Sir Denzil Everard, simply informing him that his passport was ready, and that he was to start for

Paris with Kenelm Everard the day after the morrow.

Here was a blow, and the real performance not come off yet! It never seemed to occur to the docile Angel to dispute this peremptory mandate. His fate was sealed, and so was that of the *tableaux* unless a substitute could be found.

In this emergency Sebastian proved himself worthy of his high lineage, and threw himself nobly into the breach. He came up to Amy, who was on the brink of tears, and offered to take Sir Roswal's parts, if his cousin would accept of such a poor substitute.

Amy looked up for a moment, and then exclaiming 'Oh, thank you, Seb, but you are so ugly!' dissolved in grief at the shout of laughter with which this *naïf* reply was received by the young gentleman himself, as well as the rest of the bystanders.

Sebastian wrote to his father the following day :

' Fate and Sir Denzil Everard have taken the

matter into their own hands, and poor Lismore goes to school, figuratively speaking, to-morrow. I expect Dr. Antony has pressed this measure upon the guardian; but Amy is in despair, puts up with me for want of a better, but thinks me distressingly ugly, which is painful to my vanity, and has apparently lost all zest in the affair. Charley, however, who always looks on the bright side of things, thinks her spirits will revive on the eventful night, when she once more dons all her lovely costumes, and that she will then cease to care for the loss of her "boy lover." Let us earnestly hope it. I can arrange my Oxford business so as to come back here and take the parts. One of the actors, Lord Epping, is an old friend of mine whom I was very glad to see again. He is just the same as ever, as good a fellow as ever breathed, and has married a nice wife, to whom he introduced me. I wish you could have seen the closing *tableau*, which was *not* in the original programme. It was as

natural a piece of acting as I ever saw. A note came from Lismore this morning, very properly expressed, but bearing rather the signs of being written under supervision, saying how sorry he was and all that, very civil and regretful, but breathing the spirit of submission and obedience to his superiors. Poor boy! it is just as well he should "resume his studies," like Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen, and now I hope there will be an end of him.'

It is the nature of youth to be sanguine, and Sebastian was no exception to the general rule.

In spite of the absence of the principal hero, the representations at Kendal House, which came off in due course, were eminently successful; half the world not being aware of the *contretemps* that had taken place, were none the wiser for the substitution of Mr. Sebastian Dayrell's name for that of Sir Roswal Lismore. Only Mr. Sidney, at the scene of the game of chess, remarked to a lady by his side,

‘We have lost a bit of by-play by the change of actors. I am afraid it is no longer a case of the Beautiful wooing the Ideal.’

‘Oh, so it was a serious case, was it? Dear! I wish I had seen the rehearsal. Will it ever come off, do you think? He is a Roman Catholic, I believe, but he has twenty thousand a year.’

‘Twelve, and a place in Ireland.’

‘Well, twelve is not to be despised; and what is Ireland in these days of steam?’

‘An odious country.’

‘Yes, I suppose Lord Kendal would not like it.’

‘Like it! there is no question of it. Preposterous!’ was Mr. Sidney’s last word, which of course settled the matter. Mr. Sidney was accustomed to have the last word amongst his female friends.



CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN MARCHMONT.



CHARLEY returned with his cousin Sebastian to the rectory, to get a little fresh country air, he observed; after the fatigues he had undergone, an evening in Aunt Lily's society was needed to soothe him and restore him. It was fine summer weather still, and Mrs. Arthur Dayrell was lying on a sofa in the garden, Gertrude reading to her. The young men were made very welcome, and the next half-hour was spent in discussing the Kendal House festivities, and Charley's hearers were still laughing at his droll way of narrating them, when Arthur Dayrell joined them. The twilight was coming on and the damps beginning to rise, so he ordered his wife in at once,

and then coming out, joined the young ones, who were loth to go in.

From gay conversation they had glided into graver topics, and as Arthur came out, he heard Charley saying,

‘Now, what is your definition of pleasure?’

‘That which pleases,’ quoth Sebastian.

‘And woefully does it sometimes fail in that object,’ answered Charles.

‘In your definition, Seb, you mean that the man who seeks for pleasure, is seeking to *be* pleased, and not to please,’ observed his father.

‘Well, yes, I suppose so.’

‘That is one reason why he often fails, I imagine, in finding it. Only children know what real pleasure is, because it comes to them unsought.’

‘Uncle Arthur, I wish you would give us your own idea, now, about worldly amusements and all that sort of thing. If there is anything that is a puzzle to me, it is that question of the world and its pleasures.’

‘My dear lad, your question is a very comprehensive one, even supposing that you allude only, as I presume you do, to harmless pleasures. Moralists and philosophers, from the days of Solomon downwards, have preached upon the transitory and empty nature of the world’s pleasures, without any practical result; for still every generation as it comes refuses to profit by the experience of the last, and determines to buy its own experience. To learn to prize at their real value all the gifts that the world can offer, is, generally speaking, the lesson of a lifetime. Meanwhile I do not think it is possible for one man, even if he be a clergyman, to dictate to another where he is to draw the line between harmful and harmless pleasures; and what is more, I am not sure that it is not wrong to lay any burden of the sort on the consciences of others. It is more to me a question of what *spirit* ye are of. If the spirit is true and upright, the *judgment* will be guided aright.’

‘In all ages of the world,’ said the thoughtful Sebastian, ‘there have been those specially called and chosen, of whom the world was not worthy.’

‘True, Seb; and yet, when I hear that oft-quoted and much-admired sentiment of Saint Bernard’s younger brother, “Heaven for you, brother, and earth for me—that is not fair,” I cannot help thinking that there is a fallacy in it. Because St. Bernard renounced his secular duties, and laid them on his younger brother, do I suppose that he was nearer the heavenly goal than he who took up the task that he had laid down, and fulfilled it as his appointed work? I don’t say that St. Bernard was to blame for devoting himself to a religious life, but I do say that his brother was mistaken in the inference he drew.’

“In the world, but not of it,” said Sebastian, after a pause.

‘And the world has some innocent pleasures in it,’ continued Arthur, cheerfully; ‘not that I think she has much hand in the bestowal of

them, if you come to look deep ; but I am all for you young ones enjoying those, while you are young, with that moderation which has been recommended by a higher authority than mine.'

But Aunt Lily's voice calling them in to tea now stopped their grave though pleasant talk. Charley's flying visits were generally short, and the next morning by breakfast-time he was several miles on his way to London. Quiet and monotony had seemed to settle once more on Derley Rectory.

Gertrude heard occasionally from her cousin Amabel, who mentioned incidentally that the session of Parliament was likely to be a long one, and that Lord Kendal expected to be detained in town till the end of August very likely. But not a word of Angel Lismore. Sebastian's Oxford career was now nearly at an end, and Gertrude was looking forward with great delight to his permanent residence at home as soon as he should have taken his degree. His ordination

was to take place as soon as possible after this event, and he was to succeed Mr. Herbert as curate to his father. Arthur Dayrell was, however, compelled to inflict a slight disappointment on his Gerty, for he thought it advisable that his son should receive his title for orders from an old friend of his who had a living in a populous manufacturing town. Arthur thought that a little hard work for a few months would do his Seb no harm, and be a good apprenticeship for him.

Gerty had no time to regret any London gaieties, for she was very busy. Her mother was expecting her confinement some time in the winter, and was at this time capable of very little exertion. Reginald was now between six and seven years old, but since his arrival two other children had been born, and had both died in infancy. One had been a girl, Blanche by name, and this child had lived fourteen months, and had been the delight of Gertrude's life.

She remembered vividly her sensations of delight when her little sister had been placed in her arms, and her bitter bitter grief when she saw the fair waxen image lying in the cradle, and knew that her only sister, her own especial pet and plaything, was gone, and that one joy had left her for ever. It was a long time before she found comfort in the thought that her Blanche was in the safer care of those guardian angels who had received her at her birth, and who were educating her in a better home than any on earth, one where sin and sorrow could never enter.

The other infant, a boy called after Lord Kendal, had only survived a few weeks, and his mother had been so dangerously ill at his birth that her life had been almost despaired of, and she had always been delicate since that time. They all felt anxious about her now, and Dr. Mackenzie strictly forbade that she should incur any fatigue. But she was in her usual bright,

cheerful spirits, very anxious for another girl, chiefly that Reginald might not feel himself injured by a rival brother. He was old enough to remember poor little Johnnie very well, and Gertrude remembered too distinctly what a violent aversion he had entertained against the new baby who had invaded the nursery and presumed to lie on his mother's lap. But Gerty trusted that he was too old now for such jealous feelings, though he was certainly terribly spoiled.

Gerty, therefore, as I have already observed, was very busy. Some of the household management devolved upon her, now that her mother was so much on the sofa, and the parish and schools occupied a great deal of her time. Even these occupations, prosaic as they were in themselves, had their pleasant moments. Her class of boys improved from day to day almost, and she was glad to make acquaintance with their families. Then too, as her father wished her not to neglect her own accomplishments, she

would sketch occasionally out of doors: on a fine afternoon she would drive her mother out in the basket pony carriage, and while the latter sat and enjoyed the summer air, Gerty would draw, and make rough but clever water-colour sketches of some picturesque cottage or heathy bit of common. As the summer waned and the autumn evenings closed in, papa would often want her help in writing or reading for him, for he was intending to bring out a series of lectures which he had been preaching lately, and it was the greatest pleasure to Gertrude to be of use to him in that way. A more erudite work than this was even now growing under Arthur Dayrell's pen, and he had once dropped a hint to his daughter of his great wish some day to visit the Holy Land, though this was one of those fairy visions which gild the daily life, but the realization of which is far distant.

Meanwhile Charley would often run down to the rectory, to see Gerty and to spend a quiet

Sunday. And what a model of good behaviour he was on these occasions! how devoutly he would attend morning and evening church! He liked going to church at Derley, he said: Uncle Arthur had the service done in a first-rate manner, and the people sang as if they meant it—it was real, and he liked it. But when Gerty asked what an *unreal* service was, he said he knew perfectly well, but could not explain.

‘Just you go to Mr. Honeyman’s Chapel in Beer Street, and then you will know,’ said he.

Sebastian had taken no holiday this summer; he was reading hard, and after his daily work was done, was at the service of his family, who were all devoted to him. Those three young things had many pleasant talks together, Charley amusing them with droll anecdotes from what they called ‘the great world’ which he frequented.

‘Another day, another day,
And yet another glides away.’

So might Gertrude’s life be described, as the

poet described that of the good King Arthur, whose fair name he has so grievously maligned. There was a gentle monotony about them that made them pass very quickly and pleasantly, and Gertrude in after days looked back at them as almost the happiest period of her life. But that was because sorrowful days succeeded them.

One day Charley, who had come to Derley for one of his brief visits, put his head in at the sitting-room door, and asked if he might come in. Mrs. Arthur, whose health had improved during the last few weeks, was resting on the sofa near the fire, for the nights were getting chill now. She was telling her Benjamin a story in a low voice, and the child, looking very picturesque and handsome dressed in his black velvet tunic, was leaning against her, listening intently. Gerty was copying out music for the choir. The room wore no longer its summer aspect. Thick curtains of bright blue reps replaced the summer muslins, and a carpet covered

the floor instead of the Indian matting. The room looked snug and pretty, without being really luxurious; and Charley thought it had a particularly *homey* look. He had come by the late train, and was warmly welcomed as usual, and told that, as there was service this evening, he must wait for a tea-dinner at eight o'clock or thereabouts.

'Will you come to church, Charley?' said Gerty, as she wiped her pen.

'Are you really going to leave this warm, cozy room, Gerty?' said Charley. 'No, I think I shall stay with Aunt Lily.'

'Mamma ought to rest, I am afraid,' said Gerty.

'Oh, well then,' said Charley, 'I'll come to church. Whose day is it?'

'Nobody's; but papa has service once a week at seven o'clock. A good many people like to come.'

They walked in the starry night to the church,

and Charley sat on the oaken bench in the chancel, and listened to his cousin playing the organ with a pleasant feeling of peace. I don't know whether he attended very much to the prayers, but as the short service proceeded, he felt more and more as if the world were shut out by those stone walls, and as if good angels were thronging there, and keeping evil things away. The worst of it was, that the evil things only waited outside, ready to molest the worshipper as he stepped back into the world again. Oh for the time when the earth should be full of the glory of the Lord, one vast temple to His praise!

Such were Charley's thoughts, but they did not check his blithe laugh as he and his relations sat round the tea-table that evening, and he chattered away.

'Uncle Arthur,' he said, 'what has become of Dr. Antony, do you know?'

'He is still in London, I think, working very hard amongst the poor. I believe he is a saint,

if there are (as I believe there are) such beings amongst us now.'

Arthur Dayrell could love a Roman Catholic, you see, very dearly, and even think he was on the high road to heaven, though he differed with him in faith and doctrine.

'Do you know Sir Roswal Lismore's place is let again?' continued Charley: 'there is capital shooting there.'

'Has anything been heard of that boy lately?'

'Not since my uncle and Amy went to Scotland. You know, of course, that he came back from Munich.'

'No!, really?'

'Oh, yes; and Uncle John asked him to dinner.'

'Nonsense, Charley.'

'He did—just ask him. Amy insisted upon it: little coquette!'

'Jealous, Charley?' said Mrs. Arthur, smiling mischievously at her nephew.

‘No, indeed,’ said Charles, indignantly, but blushing at the same time, which confirmed her suspicions. Mrs. Arthur knew well the wishes of Mr. Charles’s relations on that gentleman’s account, though she herself doubted such family arrangements ever coming to pass; and she might have doubted them still more, had she witnessed the *tableaux* at Kendal House.

‘Has anybody taken the Red House?’ asked Sebastian.

‘Yes, indeed, and somebody you ought to know by name, or at least Gerty ought, if your memories are good. Christian Marchmont.’

‘Christian Marchmont?’ said Gertrude, puzzled, then exclaimed, ‘Not really? how absurd!’

As she spoke, a curious scene rose to her memory, and to Sebastian’s as well. A small French seaport town, with a large bathing establishment, a little girl of ten years old, and a boy of eleven, dressed in the blouse and nether garments which are always worn in French bathing-

places, swimming and disporting themselves in the Bay of Biscay. Anon a cry for help is raised, and they see a boy of about their own age struggling in the water, apparently struck by cramp. At once the boy strikes out towards a boat in which a fisherman is lazily sculling himself; the girl swims towards the sinking boy; seizing him by the collar of his blouse, she contrives to support him till her brother comes up, and between them they keep him afloat till the boat arrives and takes them all in.

Gertrude remembered it all most vividly, and said,

‘How odd it is that we should never have met since! We went away next day, I remember, and some time after papa got a letter from Mrs. Marchmont in an odd, foreign-looking hand, thanking us for saving her boy’s life. I have still got the locket she sent me “with Christian’s love.” I remember.’

‘You ought to have the Humanity Medal by

rights,' said Charley. 'Well, it is the same Christian Marchmont, I have no doubt, and he is a brick, I can tell you. Isn't he half a Dane, Aunt Lily? You always know who everybody is.'

'Yes : his mother, Mrs. Marchmont, was a Countess Caroline Idzvelt, I believe, and this is her only boy. When his father died, he lived very much with his mother's relations in Denmark.'

'He is very foreign,' said Charley, 'but none the worse for that, I suppose : there is such an *entente cordiale* now everywhere, that we are to love everybody, even the French.'

'Not the Northern Americans,' said Seb.

'Nor the Prussians,' added Gertrude.

'Most certainly not ; we draw the line there —Yankees and Prussians excluded by Act of Parliament.'

It is not to be denied that Charles's information was interesting to both Gertrude and Seb. Gerty led a quiet life, and the advent of a new neighbour was quite an exciting event.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE HEIR'S BIRTHDAY.



NOT long after this conversation Gertrude rode over to call on her friend Lizzie Burns, and entering, after her usual custom, unannounced, found a stranger sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Burns—a pleasant-looking youth, not at all handsome, and with reddish-looking hair, who was talking eagerly when she entered. Mr. Burns was sitting very stiff and upright in his long coat, which quite touched his heels.

‘Well, I hope you will command me, Mr. Burns,’ the young man was saying: ‘if I can be of any use—’ when his words were stopped in his throat, as Gertrude appeared in the doorway, looking handsomer than ever in her habit

—her usually pale cheek rather flushed with exercise.

‘Mr. Marchmont, Gertrude,’ said Lizzie—
‘Miss Dayrell,’ as she introduced them to one another. ‘Mr. Marchmont has just taken the Red House, dear Gertrude, and he has kindly called to offer his help to our poor people.’

‘Yes,’ said Mr. Marchmont, who had risen on her entrance, and now re-seated himself, after placing a chair for Gertrude; ‘yes, I imagined, from what I had heard, that my young landlord had not been in a position to do much for the poor people here, he being, as I understand, a Roman Catholic; so I took the liberty of calling on Mr. Burns, and offering my services.’

Gertrude smiled, for Mr. Marchmont’s manner, utterly free from shyness, and rather foreign in its ease, was very pleasing, and his voice very gentle and cheery; and Gerty rejoiced for her friends’ sake that the Red House was to be occupied by one who had the means and the will

to help them ; for there was a great deal of poverty in their parish, and their income was, as we know, very small.

As for Christian Marchmont himself (I may as well state the fact at once), he had, on the spot, without pause or stay, fallen headlong in love with Gertrude : he never stopped one moment on the brink, but before he knew where he was, before he could rub his eyes and look round him, he was lost, engulfed. She was, he decided, the handsomest girl he had ever seen in his life. As for Gertrude herself, was it possible that she was at all aware of the impression she had so suddenly made ? I cannot be quite certain ; but if, as has been said, each person possesses an invisible atmosphere, which is a part of his spiritual essence, and envelopes him like a halo (invisible, I say, save to some gifted eyes), and that these atmospheres are attracted or repelled by other atmospheres, certain it is that there was something about her new acquaintance that was not

disagreeable to her. Gertrude had led a secluded life, more or less; the only young people she had ever much associated with were her cousins at the Court, and though she had, of course, acquaintances in the neighbourhood, she was superior in mind and feeling to the generality of the families who lived near the rectory. She was very friendly when they met, but neither of her parents were fond of dining out—Mrs. Arthur was too delicate, and Mr. Dayrell found it interfere with his evening services, his night schools, etc. Consequently, Lizzie Burns was Gerty's only intimate friend. As for the *man-kind* with whom she had been brought in contact, they consisted chiefly of clergymen, as was natural—people who were brought in contact with her father. There was, therefore, no *miss-ness* about Gertrude: she had grown refined, cultivated, accustomed to enter with keen interest into all that interested her father, whose constant companion we have seen she was;

hanging on his words, endeavouring constantly to stretch her intellect in some degree to the measure of his: a character much too uncommon and original to be popular with the general run of rising young merchants, or schoolgirls that had just *finished* their education. But Gertrude could not help feeling aware of it when she met one of her own species. In London Christian Marchmont would probably have been lost in a crowd of men as good as he; here he was a rarity, and Gertrude recognized a congenial spirit at once.

Mr. Burns meanwhile was explaining some matter to his visitor, in which Mrs. Burns was frequently appealed to; and Gertrude stole furtive glances at Christian's intelligent face, trying to recall the features of the frightened boy whom she had helped to rescue at Florent-sur-Mer. She wondered if he remembered the circumstance, or the name of his rescuers; when he looked up suddenly, and their eyes met. She

coloured up, but he smiled a very bright, attractive smile, and said to Gertrude,

‘Miss Dayrell, I think I have reason to remember your name, have I not?’

So he did remember the circumstance after all! She laughed and blushed, and he proceeded eagerly,

‘It is true—you know what I mean. Then we are, in fact, old acquaintances, and, on the strength of it, you must let me shake hands with you. Excuse me, Mrs. Burns, but Miss Dayrell must explain to you how she and her brother saved my life once when I was a little boy. If you will allow me, Miss Dayrell, I will call on your father, and renew my acquaintance with your brother.’

Of course it was necessary to tell the story, which Mr. Marchmont did himself, finding Gertrude was too shy to begin; and then Gerty found it was getting late, and that she must be riding homewards. She had expected to get a

word with Lizzie, but Christian seemed determined to put her on her horse. An old groom, who always lived at Dayrell Court, and took care of certain young horses that resided there, invariably attended Gertrude when she rode alone, by Lord Kendal's particular desire. Samuel had taught her to ride, and considered it one of his greatest privileges to ride after Miss Gertrude. His son was now the general stable factotum at the rectory; but young Sam (who was not far off from forty) besides being considered by his father much too young for such a responsible office, had enough to do to clean the horses without riding them. So old Samuel was walking the bay horse up and down when Gertrude came out; with his usual deliberation he was slowly dismounting in order to help his young mistress on, when Christian, who clearly considered this duty to be his office, offered his hand, and in half a second sprung her lightly into the saddle, and deftly adjusted her habit.

‘What a beauty, Miss Dayrell!’ he said, as he patted the arched neck of the favourite, who was champing his bit impatiently. He carefully gathered up the reins for her, placed them in her hand, looked at the bit to see that all was right, and stepped back to allow her to start.

‘Thank you, Mr. Marchmont; good bye,’ she said, rather embarrassed by his attentions.

He raised his hat, saying, ‘Pray be careful, Miss Dayrell, it is getting so dusk.’

Old Samuel touched his hat grimly to the polite young gentleman, and as he did so said to himself, ‘That would be young Mr. Marchmont, then; how he did look at Miss Gertrude!’ And indeed, Samuel had had a good opportunity of observing the expression of Christian’s countenance, as the latter looked up into Gertrude’s face, while, as for Gerty, she did not look at him at all.

She cantered home without any adventure, and hastened to inform her parents of the new

acquaintance she had made. 'Mr. Burns seemed very much delighted with him,' she added.

'I don't wonder,' said her father; 'he seems to have most liberal intentions, and it is a good thing that the Red House should have so good a tenant.'

The very next morning a carriage drove up to the door, and Mrs. Marchmont called upon Mrs. Dayrell, rather to the astonishment of the latter, but she found her new neighbour a most gentle inoffensive little old lady, speaking with a good deal of foreign accent, and Mrs. Dayrell took rather a fancy to her. The acquaintance thus begun seemed to progress in a singularly rapid manner, though the advances were all on the Marchmont side. To Gertrude's great surprise, William seemed to take a strong predilection from the first to young Mr. Marchmont's society; when he was at home gladly accepted all his invitations to shoot or dine and sleep, and once or twice obtained leave for Gertrude to

accept Mrs. Marchmont's pressing invitation to the Red House. Arthur Dayrell liked what he saw of the young man ; his courteous, gentle manners pleased him, and altogether he appeared to him thoroughly gentlemanlike and well conditioned.

There was one person, however, who in his occasional hasty visits seemed not to approve of this new intimacy. And this was Mr. Charles Reginald Dayrell, of H.M. Foot Guards.

Arriving one day, according to his wont, without giving much notice, he found a cheery-looking, light-haired (or rather *reddish*-haired) young gentleman sitting in Mrs. Arthur Dayrell's apartment at the twilight hour, in the very chair in which he, Charley, was wont to sit. It moreover appeared that this intruder had been shooting over the Derley preserves that very afternoon, and had called to pay his respects at the rectory before driving home to dinner. Whether he meant to have a flirtation with

Gertrude also cannot be distinctly known ; at all events, she was not there. When Charley made his usual unceremonious entrance, however, he started and looked round eagerly, but was evidently rather disappointed at the sight of a shooting jacket in the dusk. Charley was introduced, however, and soon after Mr. Christian took his leave, and after a little talk, during which Charley was decidedly absent in mind, his aunt dismissed him, telling him that he would find William in the drawing-room. Gertrude was with her father, busy in the village, and Aunt Lily wanted to rest. So Charley went to the drawing-room.

Now, be it known that Master Charles was at this moment rather in a bad humour, for causes at present not assigned. At all events, he had a vague feeling of being ill-used, and an equally undefined impression that William was at the bottom of it ; so, although he trembled slightly before the haughty William, he marched boldly

forward on the present occasion, and spoke as follows :

‘ Well, William, how are you ? What’s that fellow doing here ?’

‘ What fellow ?’ said William, who was dozing over a book, and sat up rather bewildered by Charley’s abrupt question.

‘ Why, that Marchmont. I found him established in Aunt Lily’s room as if he were quite at home. Is he going to marry Gertrude ?’ he added, with a short laugh.

William looked at him more attentively.

‘ Oho !’ he thought to himself, ‘ is that where the land lies ?’—‘ Why,’ he said aloud, ‘ supposing he is, that can’t matter to you much.’

What Charley would have replied to this must ever remain a mystery, for at this moment Arthur Dayrell and Gertrude came in, the latter all fresh and glowing from the evening air. The greetings which followed occupied all, but it did not escape William’s notice that Charley’s

manner was rather constrained, and Gertrude thought he was odd.

Soon after they dispersed to make a toilet for the supper-tea, which was the ordinary evening meal at the rectory, and William stood alone, pondering, one foot on the fender, his elbow on the chimney-piece.

William's thoughts were conflicting. He saw clearly Christian Marchmont's keen admiration of Gertrude, but he could not be at all certain whether she returned this fancy, or even whether she was aware of it. William also had suspected for a long time that Charley's feelings towards his cousin were those of a very decided lover, and that the tacit family agreement by which he was to marry Amy was becoming daily more distasteful to him. William was sorely puzzled : on the one hand he loved Amoretta himself, and was therefore glad that Charley's fancy should take any other turn ; on the other hand, he had the strongest dislike to the notion of seeing his

sister married to the heir of the Kendal titles and estates, for if all men had their deserts, he considered that he, William, would have been far the most worthy representative of that noble house. It was 'very hard lines,' certainly, that of the twin brothers, Charles should have made his first appearance in the world, and that so much should depend on this trivial incident. While pursuing in fancy this very profitable train of thought, the door opened with a bang, and Reginald burst in to inform him that tea was ready and waiting.

All were assembled in the cozy little dining-room. Mr. Chorley, the melancholy curate, was of the party, smiling sadly at Charley's jokes. This young gentleman was quite his own gracious self again, waiting on his aunt, flying round the table, and exchanging cheery remarks with his uncle, who was very fond of his young nephew and was always pleased to see him at the rectory. Arthur was not very observant in

some things, and it had not occurred to him to wonder yet how it was that a boy like Charley, living in the gayest society of London, and a welcome guest at country houses, should find time to run down so often to his quiet home. To be sure, as Charley said, Uncle John wished the Derley preserves to be shot over, and his principal object now in coming was to arrange a day for the following week with William, Mr. Marchmont, and some of the neighbours ; but still it could not escape Arthur that Charley was often there, and seemed perfectly content if he could have a canter with Gertrude, or even if he could walk with her to evening church, sit in the most cozy arm-chair in Aunt Lily's pretty sitting-room, and, in short, thoroughly domesticate himself. Little did Arthur know that Charley was this very night revolving great thoughts in his mighty mind, of which the issue may be seen hereafter.

But time pressed on with steady step. Sebas-

tian came home crowned with academic honours, and in their delight at his success all other topics seemed for the time forgotten by the happy parents. The time of Charley's coming of age drew near, and the boy seemed oppressed by some care, while his mother, who had seen but little of him since the close of the London season, missed his usually cheerful letters, and began to feel anxious lest he was getting into some mischief.

Aunt Alice, at her brother-in-law's earnest request, had accompanied him and Amabel to London, as we have already seen. But Lord Kendal did not require her to take his little daughter to the balls: the father would not relinquish the office of *chaperon* to his treasure, and sat up, or rather *stood* up, night after night with the greatest devotion and perseverance. Mrs. Dayrell could not help thinking, however, that he did not understand his duties very well, for he let out casually one day that young Lis-

more had turned up again, having apparently found Munich very insupportable, calmly adding that he had asked him and his cousin, Kenelm Everard, to dinner. So that Charley had not exaggerated in any particular. Angel was so enchanted to find himself again in London that Mrs. Charles Dayrell had not the heart to snub him, as she had sternly intended to do, and as he behaved very well and conducted himself with more *aplomb* than formerly, seemed more manly and less boyish altogether, she left off watching him and Amy, especially as the latter spoke to him no more than civility required, and devoted herself chiefly to her other guests. It was at Charley's request that she sat down to sing and play, but Aunt Alice, unsuspecting as she was, could not help seeing that Angel alone did not mingle in the laughing and talking that went on in the intervals between the songs, but leaned on the piano in silence, his great eyes fixed upon Amabel as if he would mesmerize her. The

mother's eyes involuntarily wandered to Charley and discovered him reading a novel with an air of perfect unconcern upon his countenance. It was then that the conviction forced itself unwillingly upon her mind, 'Whoever my Charley marries, it will never be his cousin Amy.'

This little scene took place quite at the end of the season; soon after, Lord Kendal, his sister-in-law, and Amy had set off for Scotland, leaving Charley to do duty, as he could not get any long leave till the winter. After their return from Scotland they had all gone together, except Charles, to Lord Kendal's place in Derbyshire, and it was not till after Christmas that the Dayrell family all met again at Dayrell Court. The 21st of January was Charley's birthday, and the usual preparations for the coming of age of the young heir were going forward with great zeal and alacrity. The usual feasting of tenantry and dependents took place, in which Amy, Gertrude, and Sebastian took great inte-

rest, working away at decorations, and making the great temporary room, where the tenants' ball was to be held, beautiful with coloured calico and wreaths of holly and evergreen.

There were very few guests in the house. Thinking it would please Arthur, Lord Kendal had good-naturedly, but somewhat thoughtlessly, invited Sir Roswal Lismore, and having become acquainted with the Marchmonts, he had asked them to meet their young landlord.

Charley alone to his mother's anxious eye did not seem in his usual light-hearted spirits. On that morning he came into his mother's room, according to his usual practice, at breakfast-time—she always breakfasted early in her own room.

She kissed him tenderly, and whispered to him the congratulations of the day, at which he smiled affectionately, and she then waited for him to speak.

'Mother,' he said, after a pause, 'I think the time has come when I must confess to you that

it is quite impossible I can ever marry my cousin Amy. Even if I had not seen enough of her goings on with Lismore to be certain that she could never care for me, I have a stronger reason, and *that* is—you must have guessed it, dear—I dearly love Gertrude. I have fought against it, but I cannot help it. I think there is no one like her in the world—not a girl in all London fit to be compared with her. I hope Uncle John will not mind.'

Mrs. Charles could not resist smiling at the boyish termination to this speech.

'My dear boy,' she said, 'I cannot say I am entirely unprepared for this confession; but tell me as candidly, do you think Gertrude is aware of the nature of your feelings towards her?'

'I don't know, mother,' he said. 'I fear I have a dangerous rival in the young man who has lately taken the Red House. Mr. Marchmont, I mean.'

‘What!’ said Mrs. Charles Dayrell, ‘that boy with the red hair? Well——’

And there she stopped, thinking with a mother’s partiality that it was a very extraordinary thing that any maiden could by possibility prefer a red-haired youth to her bright handsome Charley, the image of his fair young father.

‘He is a capital good fellow, mother,’ said the generous Charley, ‘that I must allow. We all like him; even William the austere one has taken no end of a fancy to him. But,’ and he sighed, ‘but do you think I ought to speak to Uncle John?’

‘Well, my dearest, I would not say anything to day to vex him, for it *will* vex him, I fear, though he is too good and kind ever to wish to force your inclinations, Charley. But you will be wanted, and I must finish my breakfast and my dressing. Be your own bright natural self, my darling boy, this day, your own day, and leave cares for to-morrow.’

Charley replied by a loving kiss, and departed.

‘Poor mother!’ he said to himself, ‘she would look more sad if she knew of this.’

And as he spoke, he felt the edges of a thin letter in his pocket. It was an offer from General Sir Archibald Menteith, an old friend of the family, to accompany him as his *aide-de-camp* to India in three weeks’ time. Charley had not answered it yet; he had three days to consider of it, and he had only that morning received the letter.

But the hero of the day resolved, as his mother advised, to cast off all cares for this day at all events; and it would seem as if all those belonging to him had resolved with one consent to do the same. Even nature seemed to be gay; she gemmed the grass with her own diamonds in the early morning, and everything sparkled in the winter sunshine.

The festivities all went off well—the tenants’ dinner, the games that followed, and Gertrude

declared she felt as fresh as ever as she sat by Amy at the merry tea-table before dinner, while the young hostess was dispensing her hospitalities around. Charley's mother, Uncle John, even Uncle Arthur were there. Christian Marchmont sat close to Gertrude ; William, Sebastian, and Reginald were all present. In this family the presence of the elders was never felt as a check upon their glee by the younger branches, and John and Arthur, never seen to more advantage than when together, laughed, talked, told droll anecdotes, and kept the young ones in fits of laughter. The only person wanting was Aunt Lily ; she had driven in the little pony carriage to see the tenants' dinner, but this exertion had been as much as she could manage, and she had returned home, refusing to let any one stay with her, and sending Reginald under Gertrude's care to the Court. Gerty and Redgie were to sleep at the big house, at Amy's earnest request, and though the former was not quite happy at leav-

ing her mother even for a night just now, her scruples were all overcome, and she was told to remain and enjoy herself. It was a bright pretty ball, and Gertrude, to whom all was new, thought herself in fairyland. Both cousins looked remarkably lovely in their different ways; they were dressed alike in white, and wore wreaths of holly in their hair. Gertrude was looking her very best, for Amy's little German maid had dressed her long dark hair quite beautifully, so that Amy danced round her in ecstasy, and pronounced the whole effect to be perfect. Little Reginald, dressed in his black velvet jacket, white waistcoat, black velvet knickerbockers and black silk stockings, his thick light brown curls brushed carefully off his forehead, looked wondrously pretty and picturesque, and was the admiration of all the farmers' dames and their buxom daughters. How pleased meanwhile the brothers felt as they surveyed their offspring; and as for Charley, he might have had two fathers,

for both his uncles seemed to claim a share in 'poor Charley's boy,' as they followed his light movements with their eyes, and then looked at one another, blushing, as if detected. It was of course *de rigueur* that Charley should open the ball with Lady Amabel Dayrell, and it was not, therefore, surprising that Christian Marchmont should hasten to claim the hand of Gertrude, who consented gladly. Charley watched her bright happy face with a secret pang, and in a moment of pique refrained from asking her for the next dance, as he had originally intended. As for poor Gertrude herself, so simple was she that her only idea was that she should be extremely fortunate if she danced once or twice in the course of the evening ; great, therefore, was her delight when partners poured in, for her uncle was resolved that his Gerty should dance, and was miserable if he saw her sitting down for an instant. Nor did Lord Kendal forget for an instant his humbler guests, and his nephews

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understood his wishes and thoroughly seconded them. The young men exerted themselves with right good will: even William descended from his magnificence for a while and danced indefatigably with the tenants' wives and daughters, making himself as pleasant as if he had been the heir-apparent himself. So said Amy in a naughty whisper to Gertrude.

Supper was over, and at last a slight pause took place. Gertrude, flushed and happy, was standing with Sebastian and Amy, the two latter deliberating what should come next, for the room was thinning and departures were beginning, when it occurred to her that all this time she had not danced once with the hero of the evening, and she said so aloud. She looked round to see where he was, and saw him leaning against a pillar, looking rather tired, she thought. She looked at him earnestly, and he started as if to come towards her, when Christian Marchmont anticipated him.

‘This is our “Lancers,” Miss Dayrell,’ he exclaimed, eagerly, and led her off as the music was beginning.

How little did Gertrude think that Charley had been counting the times that Christian had danced with her, and that he now said under his breath, ‘That makes the fourth!’

But the hour was waxing late, and Charley, who had danced twice with Amy and nobly done his duty by the world in general, resolved to make an effort and obtain Gertrude’s hand for the ‘Sir Roger de Coverley’ which was to close the ball. Not finding his cousin in the ball-room, he went on into an ante-room, where a tea-table was laid out. There he saw the object of his search, but not alone. Christian Marchmont was standing before her, the expression of his face all earnest pleading; but his words struck cold on poor Charley’s heart.

‘But, Miss Dayrell, may I not hope at all? won’t you say something to me?’

‘Oh, Mr. Marchmont,’ said poor Gertrude,
‘I—I can’t—say anything now.’

‘But only say I may hope.’

Charley, the soul of honour, here found his intellects and his feet again ; he quietly withdrew, and did not ask Gertrude to give him the dance in question. Indeed, she did not dance it at all, for when he next looked round for her, she was sitting by the side of Uncle John, looking very tired, and Mr. Christian was dancing away with might and main with a small pug-nosed young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer.

The ball was over. Gertrude was in bed, but not asleep ; many things had happened to keep her awake. And, actually—was it true ? did Christian Marchmont really want to marry her, after such a short acquaintance, too ? But did Gertrude wish to marry Christian ? That was another question. Certainly she liked him : he was very attractive and pleasant ; rather harum-

scarum perhaps; but nobody else cared about her; Charley had not asked her to dance once even, which was not a cousinly or even a brotherly act, for Sebastian and William had both danced with her. Altogether it was distracting, and she wetted her pillow with tears as she wished herself at home that she might talk to mamma about it. Poor Gerty! her last thought—I am obliged to confess it—was, How very unkind it was of Charley never to have danced with her once!

And Charley? In the grey of the early morning, the poor boy, for he was but a boy still, was writing in his little room a letter which seemed to give him pain. His lips were compressed, as though he had taken some powerful resolution. He dashed off the direction, sealed and stamped the letter energetically, then went down stairs, let himself out of the house, and walked across to the stables. At his summons a young groom lad presented himself, half dressed.

‘Tom,’ he said, ‘I want you to saddle Rose, my mare, and take this to Chesney to catch the early post. Don’t lose time, and trot the mare steadily.’

‘There, I have done it,’ said Charley, as he walked back. ‘I shall tell Uncle John everything to-morrow—I mean this morning, and he will agree with me that it is the only thing to be done.’

Then Charley got into bed and fell fast asleep. Poor foolish Charley! That letter accepted the aide-de-campship, and Charley must leave England for India in three weeks’ time.





CHAPTER IX.

SORROW.

GERTRUDE had fallen asleep at last, and felt as if she had closed her eyes for about five minutes, when she was awoke by two arms round her neck and soft kisses on her cheek. Opening her eyes, she beheld her cousin Amy.

‘Amy,’ she said, ‘are you come to wake me? Am I very late?’

And rousing herself, she wondered why Amabel did not at once reply.

‘I am afraid you must get up, dear Gerty; I think you are wanted at home.’

‘Wanted!—Mamma?’ cried Gertrude in a frightened voice.

‘Here is a note for you, dearest: don’t be

frightened; but I believe a little boy has been born, and I suppose they want you to come home. It is past nine o'clock.'

Gerty tore open the note.

'Why, it is from Aunt Alice!'

'Yes. Sophie says that Uncle Arthur was summoned just after you went up to bed last night, and Aunt Alice went off with him, but they would not have you disturbed.'

Gerty, without listening to this, read the note hastily.

'Dear Gerty,' (it said) 'come over as soon as you are dressed. You have got a little brother, but your mother is not as well as we could wish, and your father will be glad to have you.

'Your affectionate aunt,

'ALICE DAYRELL.'

Gerty's toilette was soon made, and Amy waited on her affectionately, bringing her some

coffee, and telling her that the brougham was ordered to take her to the rectory as soon as she was ready. In a very short time she was at the rectory door, and was met in the passage by her aunt.

‘A fine healthy little boy, Gerty darling,’ she said; ‘but your dear mother is fearfully weak: she wishes to see you directly, however, and Dr. Mackenzie says she must not be thwarted.’

Gerty entered the darkened room, and her mother opening her eyes, fixed them with great love and tenderness on her only girl. She looked towards the door, and then imploringly at her husband: he divined that look, and, stepping softly back, brought the sleeping infant, and placed it beside her. Gertrude knelt and kissed the tiny face, and her mother said in a whisper,

‘He is yours, darling; I give him to you.’

She was too weak to say more, but she smiled on Arthur Dayrell an ineffable smile of affection, and seemed to sink back in sleep. All that

human help could do for Lilian Dayrell was done.

‘They watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low.’

Could she but once rally, Dr. Mackenzie said,
all would be well.

It was not to be.

It was long after that, Gertrude said, that at about three o’clock in the morning, a bright light suddenly shone in the room, though the fire was red and low, and a soft unearthly strain of music seemed to fill the air. Then all was still with a silence so intense that Gertrude hardly breathed for the awe that flooded her very soul. She cast one glance at her father’s face as he raised himself from his kneeling posture by the bed-side, and till her last hour Gertrude will never forget the glorified expression, which had not begun to be sorrow, in his calm holy eyes. He held out his arms to her, and in a moment she was lying on his breast.

‘My Gertrude,’ he said, ‘she is in eternal peace.’

Yes, all was over : the wife and mother had been taken from them, and the happy rectory was an abode of sorrow and desolation. I will not attempt to describe the days of anguish that followed the death of Lilian Dayrell. It was a mild winter’s day, grey and soft, on which they laid her in the green churchyard of Derley village, and Gerty stood by her mourning father’s side, and inwardly vowed that she would never leave him. On their return to their desolate home, he had gone at once to his private study, saying, ‘I must be alone now, Gerty,’ and she crept to her own room, and sat by the fire thinking and praying. But Gertrude had never been accustomed to think of herself, and her thoughts soon turned to her brothers. William had felt the shock of his mother’s death most terribly. He had obtained a prolongation of his leave of absence from his regiment, and was

still at home, and Gerty longed to comfort him, but his stern grief repelled and awed her, and it was a great comfort to her to turn to her darling Seb, and listen to his wise and tender words. Aunt Alice and Uncle John, too, were very kind; in fact, all were kindness itself; but if she had not been engrossed with her own sorrows, she would have seen that they also had a grief of their own, in addition to the common bereavement which had afflicted them all. Aunt Alice had taken possession of Reginald for the last few days, and Amy did all she could to comfort him, for the poor child was in rather a strange state, and Gerty was relieved to have him off her hands.

As she sat thus meditating on many subjects, Sebastian came in, bringing her a cup of tea, and stirring up the fire, he sat down on a low stool near, and said,

‘Gerty, darling, I want to talk to you, if you think you can attend now.’

‘Yes, dear,’ said Gerty, raising her swollen eyes from the fire, ‘I can attend perfectly; and I wanted to talk to somebody too, either Aunt Alice or you, but I would rather it was you just now.’

‘Well,’ said Seb, ‘I walked home with poor Uncle John, and he took me into the library, and talked to me for some time, which kept me. Have you observed that Charley has been absent all this week?’

‘Oh, no, indeed, Seb; I have not been able to think of Charley, or any one. He was there to-day, wasn’t he?’

‘Yes, he was, and so overcome, that he and Aunt Alice went home together, and I have not had a word with him. Gerty, it is of him I have to speak. He is going on foreign service.’

‘What, Charley! How? Is his regiment ordered abroad?’

Gertrude had hazy ideas about the Guards,

but she knew they had been in the Crimea once upon a time.

‘No,’ said Seb, ‘he is going as *aide-de-camp* to Sir Archibald Menteith in India. It is a good appointment, I believe, for those who wish to see a little of India, but of course his mother cannot bear the idea of parting with him. And it seems that he foolishly accepted in a hurry, without telling Uncle John or my aunt. Well, after he had done it and there was no drawing back, he told my uncle, who was quite angry, for *him*, and spoke to him very severely, but now I hear he approves of his going, and likes his spirit and enterprise.’

‘And poor Aunt Alice, Seb, what a blow for her! What will she do without him?’

‘I don’t know whether I ought to ask, Gerty,’ said Seb, looking full at her, ‘but I do wonder whether you had anything to do with it?’

‘I, Seb? Oh, dear, no: Charley doesn’t think of me. Why, he never even asked me to dance

that—dreadful night. Oh, Seb! how long ago that ball seems—and such a thing happened at it, Seb! I don't know what to do about it; yet something must be done, I suppose, and I don't know whom to ask.'

'What happened?' said Seb, astonished.

'Well, Mr. Marchmont proposed to me—asked me to marry him.'

'And what did you say?'

'Really, I don't know what I said. I don't dislike him at all, Seb, but I don't know him well enough to marry him, and I don't think I care enough about him either. But, Seb,' she added, 'that is all neither here nor there now, for of course nothing should induce me to leave poor papa now.'

'And that is what you would like him to be told, dear?' said Seb gently.

'Yes, Seb, for of course, you know, he must have an answer. But about Charley, Seb'—and the brother could not help seeing that this topic

was a subject of much greater interest to Gertrude than the other—‘do you think Amy refused him?’

‘No, for I don’t think he has the least inclination to marry her. If he cares for anybody, it is for you, Gerty.’

‘Oh, no, Seb: you are quite mistaken; for if he did, wouldn’t he have asked me to dance, and would he go off to India in this way?’

‘Why, that is just what he would do if he cared for you and thought you did not care for him.’

But Gerty would not hear of this solution of the difficulty, and repeated that even in that case she could not leave her father, so that all question of marriage must be set aside for the present. It was therefore settled that Seb should see Christian Marchmont, from whom he had that afternoon received an anxious and sympathizing letter, and communicate to him poor Gertrude’s decision.

This office was, however, taken out of his hands by William, to whom Sebastian thought it right to communicate the facts, and William pronounced at once that he, as the eldest, was the proper person to speak to Mr. Marchmont, and he went over to the Red House and saw him. William never told Sebastian exactly what he said to the anxious suitor, but informed him on his return that Christian had behaved like a thorough gentleman, and that he had no intention of giving her up, but was ready to wait any length of time. Sebastian also found out accidentally that William had seen Charley, and had evidently given him to understand that Gertrude would marry Christian one day, though at present nothing could be settled. Seb never ventured to object to any of William's proceedings, but he could not help feeling annoyed that he had mentioned the subject at all to his cousin.

Gertrude saw Charley once more before he started for India. It was in the pretty sitting-

room that they met for the last time, for her father had at once told her that his Gerty's presence in those rooms would never obliterate the dear memory with which they must ever be associated, and he would rather see her there than that they should remain empty and uninhabited. Gertrude was, therefore, sitting there one snowy afternoon, the baby, a sweet fair child, lying asleep on her lap, and Reginald reading a story-book, when her aunt and Charley came in, the latter, as she felt at once, to say good bye. It was a short and painful interview, an unsatisfactory interview, where all felt so much and knew so truly what the others were feeling. And yet, in this case, how little did two of those present guess at what was passing in the mind of the other ! Gertrude, as she looked down at the sleeping boy in her lap, could not dream of the tender affection that was welling up in Charley's breast, as he gazed on his cousin's pale down-cast features, and longed to share her grief and

take her to his heart. And he, on his side, was equally ignorant of the undeveloped feeling for him, which needed but the touch of his magic wand to bring it at once into life. So these two parted, and even when Charley rose up and said, 'I think—I am afraid—I must say good bye now,' and she held out her hand, and said in a voice very low from restrained emotion, 'Good bye, *dear* Charley,' he only thought to himself—foolish Charley!—'She has often seemed more sorry to see me go away when I have gone up to town for a week;' then, mastered by a sudden impulse, he took the child in his arms, looked for a few moments in its unconscious face, then gave one earnest look into Gerty's eyes. She coloured crimson beneath his gaze. Charley sighed deeply, returned the infant again to the sister's arms, and as it lay there placed one little hand on Gertrude's lips, then pressed it to his own, and with one 'God bless you, Cousin. Gertrude,' left the room.

It was almost a mute, yet most touching farewell; but Gerty was too bewildered by the strangeness of her cousin's action to say anything, or even to hear her aunt's parting words. She returned her kiss mechanically, and with the same outward composure which she had shown throughout the visit; but when she was left alone, Gerty took the earliest opportunity of seeking her own room, and there shed many bitter tears over the happy days that were gone for ever.





CHAPTER X.

EUSTACE.


IT was a sad break-up to a happy home, and for a time all seemed stunned by their grief; but Arthur Dayrell showed in this great bereavement that no sorrow can utterly annihilate him who has ever walked in the light of a true and earnest faith. After a time he resumed his duties in the parish, and though his step was heavy and his countenance bore the marks of deep-seated grief, his sympathizing ear was still ever open to the sorrows and the cares of his flock. Nor did he shrink from mentioning the name of her who had left his side indeed, but only for a time, and who was waiting for him on the other side the flood. From the very first he would encourage

his children to talk of her, and the only difference that could, perhaps, be discerned in his intercourse with them, was that he seemed to lavish an increased measure of love upon her darling and treasure, little Reginald. The child was constantly with him. Arthur gave up nearly all his spare time to him, and Sebastian and Gertrude had to rack their brains to invent lures to keep Redgie out of the library, for fear he should presume too much on his father's devotion, and weary him.

Gertrude, perhaps, felt the change that had come upon them all as much as any one: hitherto her life had been sunshiny and happy, with few cares; but now it must be different. All the household duties must devolve upon her, for she knew that her mother never allowed her father to be harassed by domestic details, and unfortunately Gerty had had very little practice in any of these duties. She had always been her father's companion, for little Mrs. Arthur

had had a peculiar talent for household management, and had preferred keeping it entirely in her own hands. Gerty, seeing clearly, therefore, that if her father was to depend on her for his comfort, she must put her shoulder to the wheel, at once roused herself from her grief, and astonished the head of the kitchen by coming down one morning and taking possession of the insignia of authority forthwith. But Mary was an old and valued servant, and was quite ready to teach Miss Gertrude anything in the world she knew herself; so that Gerty, who was most anxious-minded, and full of fears of her own incompetence and inefficiency, found her difficulties smoothing away wonderfully as she grappled with them. Still, it was often hard work, and to Gertrude very distasteful work in itself, the more so as she had nobody to enter into her difficulties except Sebastian, ever her sympathizing friend, to whom she poured out all her perplexities and minor troubles. Ger-

trude had no time now for her old favourite occupations, such as drawing and other light amusements; for, besides indoor cares, she had still her old parish work to attend to, and she would have done anything rather than give this up. In addition to all this, there was another occupation, which, though a great care and responsibility, was a dear delight to Gerty, and was regarded by her at the same time in the light of a sacred trust. This, I need hardly explain, was the charge of the poor baby. To him Gertrude was quite devoted: she would willingly have spent hours in the nursery bending over the little brown head, and the child never seemed so happy and content as when in her arms. He was sometimes wakeful at night, and Arthur, as he also lay awake shut in with his sorrow, in the still hours of the night often heard her sweet low voice singing lullabies to his motherless boy. It was then, to Arthur's fancy, as if both he and his infant son mourned for



her who had left them, and as if her angel had come to comfort the wailing babe, while *he* had no angel to comfort him in his far deeper desolation.

On the first mild day the little boy had been christened, and Gertrude had held him in her arms at the font, and it was with a choking voice that Mr. Chorley pronounced the words, 'Eustace Arthur, I baptize thee.' He was so named because his mother had once expressed a liking for the name ; and how earnestly did his young godmother, as she kissed the dewy brow, resolve that she would do her utmost to bring up this treasure for heaven.

The spring and summer months passed heavily. Sebastian was ordained, and went, as had been settled, for a few months, to serve as curate to the hard-worked Mr. Cleever, at Milton Northern, before coming home to take his father's curacy ; and his place was supplied by William, who came home on leave from time to time.

Dayrell Court was soon to be vacant, for late in the summer Lord Kendal went abroad, partly, it was supposed, that he had suddenly become alive to the fact of young Lismore's attentions, but chiefly that a winter in a warm climate had been recommended for his health, which was not in a comfortable state. Aunt Alice went with them, and was a great loss to Gertrude, who often referred to her for guidance and counsel. Thus, Gertrude was left quite alone with her responsibilities and cares, for William was no help to her, rather the reverse. Reginald was at this time her great anxiety. He had had no teaching but what his mother had given him; and Gertrude tried hard to follow her mother's system, and continue his lessons at the same hour. But this was not so easy in practice: the boy was very idle, and would not give his attention to anything in the shape of a lesson; and before he had half done his easy tasks, the baby would make his appearance to

be taken care of during the nurse's dinner hour, and the little fellow was beginning to know her well, and to stretch out his arms to come to her. Meanwhile, she never noticed that in Redgie's childish heart was arising a strong dislike to the baby brother, who seemed to him to be the cause of all the sorrow that had entered the house. Reginald had observed that his arrival had been coincident with the loss of the being who had loved him so devotedly, and he regarded the unconscious intruder with a silent though deep-rooted hostility, which threatened the most unhappy results. In short, Redgie positively hated the baby; and the nurse—a young woman whom poor Mrs. Dayrell had engaged to take charge of her expected child—was a thoughtless, injudicious person, and was constantly 'nagging' at the elder boy, to use a homely but expressive phrase, and telling him 'not to wake the baby,' and 'not to touch the baby,' till one day he horrified her by expressing

a wish that the baby was dead—he had never asked it to come, and goodness only knew why it had come. Then, stamping his foot, he had burst out of the room to hide the rising tears, and left Jane holding up her hands, speechless with indignation at ‘Master Reginald’s wickedness.’

Gertrude was unfortunately blind to this state of feeling in her little brother. If she observed that he did not notice the child while it was with her, she ascribed it to the usual indifference of a child of seven to a baby in arms, and hoped that he would be very fond of it later, when it became old enough to be a companion and plaything to him. Once Sebastian, during a short visit that he paid at home, warned her not to make too much of little Eustace, to the exclusion of Redgie’s claims; and she, poor child, worn out just then by the accumulation of duties which all seemed to press upon her at once, had simply laid her head on his shoulder

and cried, which frightened him and diverted his thoughts from the subject on hand.

But William came down to see his father, and, though not ill-intentioned, added to her cares instead of lightening them. He would come in late in the afternoon, and find her in the sitting-room, enjoying half an hour of baby's society before his *coucher*. William disliked babies in general, and rather shared Reginald's feelings towards this one; at all events, he thought it his mission to snub poor Gertrude's devotion to Eustace. On one of these occasions, he stalked in, and finding the little one crawling about the floor, and Reginald looking sulky and curled up in the corner of the sofa, he called out,

‘Well, old fellow, what’s the row? has anybody been bullying you? Come over here.’

‘Do take care of the baby, William,’ cried Gertrude, who was working at a frock for him.

‘I won’t hurt the young shaver,’ said William, giving the child a half contemptuous shove with

his foot, and stepping as close as he dared to the little fat hand without actually treading on it. Gertrude bit her lip, but restrained the observation which trembled upon her tongue, while William called out,

‘Come here, Redgie.’

‘I can’t,’ responded the boy.

‘Why not? Have you lost the use of your limbs?’

‘Gertrude said I was to keep quiet, lest I should knock the baby over.’

‘Oh, that’s it, is it?’ said William. ‘I’ll tell you what, my young friend: the nursery is the place for little plagues like you, so I shall carry you there at once.’

And he took up the baby from the floor. Now, Eustace had no objection to being carried about by his papa, or even Sebastian, but he was not used to William, who had never touched him since his birth; he no sooner, therefore, found himself in strange arms, than he set up a

loud and piteous wail, and stretched out his little arms to Gerty. All the mother-love for the motherless one rose to Gertrude's breast as she sprang forward, exclaiming,

'Oh, William, don't! And papa will be here directly, expecting to see him.'

Unfortunately, William could not hear what she said in the tumult that he himself had raised, but, signing to Reginald to open the door, he marched up stairs with the struggling child, who filled the house with his cries, while Jane came running out in consternation, and received her frightened charge, who clung to her as if she was his only hope.

'Tiresome spoilt brat!' ejaculated William, as he came back into the sitting-room, and added, 'Now, Redgie, come here, and I will tell you a story, now we have got rid of him.'

'Yes, yes,' cried Reginald, jumping up on him, while Gertrude restrained her vexation by a great effort sufficiently to say,

‘He was perfectly good, William, till you snatched him up so roughly.’

Poor Gertrude’s heart was very full: she felt the unkindness of her brother’s manner more even than his action, and his setting Reginald against her too she felt very hard. Soon after, when her father came in, looking very weary and careworn, she hoped he would ask why Eustace was not there, but he only said,

‘I suppose the baby is gone to bed, Gerty?’

‘I sent him off,’ said William, looking up; and Reginald running up to his father at that moment, diverted his attention, and the subject was dropped.

After this uncomfortable little scene, Gertrude was afraid to have the ‘child so much down stairs, and she only brought him when his father asked for him. Meanwhile the little fellow thrived, and as the autumn and winter passed away he grew strong and robust, and astonished Arthur one fine morning in March by shouting

‘Papa!’ from the nursery window as he paced the gravel walk before breakfast.

Poor Gertrude, on the contrary, had begun to lose her health and good looks amidst her worries; and one day her friend Mrs. Burns, who had called to see her, remarked upon her pale cheeks and heavy eyes. Gertrude acknowledged that she had one of her bad headaches, which had become more frequent of late, and that Reginald was rather too much for her.

Mrs. Burns, after talking to her a little about her health, and giving her a little motherly advice, said, ‘I met Mr. Marchmont just now. He has arranged to take on the Red House for the next shooting season. He inquired very anxiously after you, Gertrude.’

‘Did he?’ said Gertrude, blushing; ‘he is very kind.’

‘You won’t be angry, dear,’ added kind little Lizzie, ‘but Mr. Marchmont has told me all about his attachment.’

‘Oh, I don’t mind at all, dear Lizzie; but it is out of the question my marrying or thinking of marrying at present: that is what I have given him clearly to understand.’

‘Do you think you care for him at all, Gerty?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Gertrude, languidly. ‘I don’t seem to know whether I care about anything or anybody, sometimes.’

‘Come, Gerty, this won’t do,’ said her friend. ‘You have got a headache now and are unwell, but you must not give way to despondency: remember, you have to cheer your father and keep him up after his work is done. Supposing I were to take Reginald back with me now? He can have a run with the boys in the garden, and Mr. Burns will bring him back somehow. Do you think Mr. Dayrell would object?’

‘Oh, no, I am sure he would not. Poor boy! he does want companions very much, and I hope he will go to school soon.’

Reginald was found with some difficulty, and

persuaded to go off with Mrs. Burns, and in a short space was tearing round the little garden, followed by a troop of admiring young Burnses of all ages and dimensions.

Gertry herself had to give way and go to bed ; and it is fair to observe, that even William missed her extremely, and made such remarkably bad tea for his father that he could not drink it. But the next morning Gertrude was up and well again, though looking very pale, and William was rather more gracious than usual on finding a favourite dish of grill prepared for his morning's repast. He put the inquiry, How was her head ? somewhat in the short gruff tone with which sailors ask that question of one another, in reference, not to the human skull, but to the ship's course at that particular moment ; and then, announcing that as it was such a fine spring morning he was going to ride to Chesney, inquired if he could do anything for her. He was going to ride the mare—he supposed she

had no objection. Gerty had no commissions for him, but suggested that he should take Redgie with him on his Shetland pony, to which William was graciously pleased to consent. He should get the morning paper, he said, as he wanted to look whether some report was in it, and he could not wait till four o'clock, the usual hour for delivering the papers.

A little before the early dinner hour he came in, bringing the 'Times' and some letters for Gertrude, which he tossed over to her, and said,

'My father's out, I suppose.'

'Yes,' said Gertrude, as she caught her letters. 'Has anything happened, William?' for she saw that he was excited out of his usual imperturbability.

'Why, yes, that report is quite true—by the bye, you were gone to bed last night when Marchmont brought that young shaver back, and told us that there was a report of a mutiny among the Sepoys. It seems a much more serious

business than was at first imagined. There, read that.'

It was indeed the intelligence of the Indian mutiny, but Gertrude did not at first take in the full significance of the tidings.

'A mutiny in the Indian army!' she said; 'but that will soon be put down, will it not?'

'There is the place,' said William, pointing to the paragraph, which Gertrude read till she came to the mention of General Sir Archibald Menteith. Then she changed colour, and said,

'Then Charley's general is marching against the mutineers: did you see that, William?'

'Of course he is,' said William gruffly. 'Why, everybody will have to go who is available. Those black fiends are investing Cawnpore, and they will attack Lucknow next. Delhi is in their hands. Oh, it is an uncommonly serious business, I can tell you. They will send out somebody from home, I shouldn't wonder, to take the command.'

William took up the paper and marched out with it to meet his father and brother, whom he saw coming through the garden.

Gertrude felt sick. A multitude of thoughts crowded through her head. Here was Charley suddenly plunged into a fearful struggle, his mother's only treasure exposed to hourly peril; and Gertrude clasped her hands, and asked herself the question, Had *she* anything to do with the boy's departure? She looked back to their last happy evening, to the ball at the Court; she thought of Christian Marchmont's words to her; and then she thought of Charley's last farewell. As she recalled it all, a strange light broke in upon her mind: she knew now that Charley loved her, and had never loved any one else, and she knew too that she loved her cousin. And then bright visions began to float across her mental eye: she saw her young soldier return a hero, the Victoria Cross upon his breast, brown from an Indian sun. She saw his mother's face

of deep happiness, his uncle's proud delight ; and the sanguine temperament of youth predicted that all would yet be well.

But only for a short time could these joyous anticipations prevail. As the telegrams and letters came in, the anxiety of the whole family increased, and they now longed for the return of Lord Kendal and his sister, which was expected very shortly. Under what circumstances the intelligence of the mutiny reached the travellers must be described in another chapter.





CHAPTER XI.

MONTE PELLEGRINO.

IT was an exquisite day, with the delicious balmy warmth that is only felt under a Southern sky. The windows of the *salon* in the Trinacria hotel were wide open, and a young girl was sitting listlessly looking out over the deep blue waters of one of the loveliest bays in the world—that of Palermo. Every little rugged cliff on the Zeffarana promontory was sharply defined by its blue shadow, while the Monte Pellegrino on the left glowed in soft golden sunshine. Very soon the steamer from Naples bringing the mails was seen puffing across the rippling water, and at the same time a joyous voice outside was heard saying,

‘ The steamer is coming in, Lady Amabel, but

the mails will not be delivered for some hours yet. Will you and Mrs. Dayrell come to the cathedral now, or the Cappella Palatina? Nino says they are open now, but always shut in the afternoon.'

'Oh, yes: my aunt wants to see the pulpit and the marbles in the Cappella Palatina immensely. I will call her, and we will be ready directly,' said Amy Dayrell, jumping to her feet. 'But where are your travelling companions, Sir Roswal?'

'Oh, they are gone to the Convent of San Martino. I have been there before, and I don't care to hear the organ play opera tunes, though it is a very fine one.'

Amy hastened to summon Mrs. Dayrell, and Lord Kendal joining them, they all went together to the lovely Cappella Reale, which is in the royal palace. Both Lord Kendal and his sister-in-law were devoted to art, and they were soon absorbed in the beauties of this exquisite

chapel, and hardly less enchanted with the Martorana and the Santa Caterina, to which their young guide subsequently conducted them. Finally they returned for a second inspection of the first-named of the three churches, and were soon utterly oblivious of the two young people, one of whom, who cared nothing for chapels, or churches either, and did not know Saracenic from Gothic architecture, proposed that they should go and buy prickly pears, if they could find any, for their luncheon.

This, it must be confessed, was the general routine of sight-seeing that went on during the travels of Lord Kendal and his family. Sir Roswal Lismore generally contrived to find out where they were going, and to join them if he could find a pretext for doing so, and Amy was of opinion that there could not be a more admirable way of making a tour on the continent. She was quite ready to go and see everything that was suggested, but she never looked at

anything, and to this hour has a confused idea that Pompeii and Pæstum are one and the same thing.

Though the season was nearly over, they contrived to find some prickly pears, which they peeled with deft fingers, and this done, proceeded to inveigle Lord Kendal to the Gardens di Serra del Falco, when Nino, a clever little Palermitan *laquais-de-place*, who had been sent back to the hotel to fetch a carriage for them, appeared, saying that the letters and *journaux* had arrived, and that he thought their excellencies would like to have them. Accordingly, their excellencies having ascended the little crazy vehicle which was to take them to Monreale, were glad to open their letters at their ease. As may be expected, they were much troubled at the news which had already perturbed the hearts of their relatives at home, for they learned for the first time that their boy was in peril, and Lord Kendal, looking compassionately at his sister-in-law's pale face

and imploring eyes, read her wishes before she could utter them.

‘Yes,’ he said, replying to her thoughts, ‘at home we shall learn more of what is going on : we will start at once. Nino, we will not go to Monreale to-day,’ he added in Italian ; ‘let the horses’ heads be turned. I wish to go back to the hotel directly.’

‘*Cenza, si,*’ said the brisk little man ; and the carriage was soon retracing its way to the Trinacria hotel. Lord Kendal made immediate inquiries how soon the steamer would start for Naples, and was rather disappointed to find that they would have to wait two days. The delay was vexatious, but there was no help for it ; and as their expedition to Monreale was broken up, he proposed to Amy that they should hire some *ciucci*, or donkeys, for her and her aunt, and that they should make the ascent of the Monte Pellegrino, and visit Santa Rosalia’s cave. This arrangement suited Amy perfectly, as she could

then make Sir Roswal lead her *ciuccio* for her, for she maintained that he had caught the particular sound of the *A—h!* by which Italian donkeys are incited to accelerate their speed.

As usual, the two young people soon found themselves some way in advance of the others; they explored the cave and all that it contained. Angel devoutly crossed himself before the shrine of Santa Rosalia, and then Amy suggested that they should leave the donkey with its olive-complexioned attendant, and scramble up to the telegraph point, which they descried above their heads. Angel, ever obedient, consented gladly, and when they had arrived breathless at the summit, and fancied they saw distant Etna like a faint white cloud in the sky, they were fain to sit on a rock and rest, and wonder what the elders would think of their absence.

At last Sir Roswal said,
'I am afraid, Lady Amabel, that Mrs. Dayrell will be very anxious about your cousin.'

‘Yes—poor Aunt Alice! I don’t know what she will do if anything happens to Charley.—So silly of him to go out there,’ she added.

‘Perhaps he had a reason for wishing to leave England just then.’

‘He wanted to see service, I suppose.’

‘Oh, no doubt; but there may have been another reason.’

‘I don’t know of any other,’ said Amy, poking at a stone with the stick which she had taken to help her ascent.

‘Perhaps he loved you, Lady Amy,’ said Sir Roswal, suddenly raising his magnetic eyes, and fixing them upon her.

‘Oh, dear, no,’ said Amy, laughing and blushing. ‘What put that into your head?’

‘Who could be near you, and not love you?’

‘I think we had better perhaps go down the hill again,’ said Amy, rising. ‘You must not talk like that: I told you nôt, you know, when you began at Como.’

‘Oh, Lady Amabel, don’t go. I do mean it. I love you with all my heart, and you will make me so happy if you will only be my wife.’

‘I have always understood you were meant to marry your cousin Viviana,’ said Amy, mischievously. ‘What will Dr. Antony say?’

‘Nothing shall make me marry Viviana. I love only you, and shall love you all my life.’

‘Well, well,’ said Amy, after a pause; ‘but I don’t know what papa will say.’

‘He won’t refuse you anything, I am sure,’ said Sir Roswal.

And herein the young gentleman did, doubtless, display a certain amount of discrimination of character, for Lord Kendal had never been known to refuse his daughter anything, from the moment she could express her wishes in the most infantile language.

The two young things having thus, as far as depended upon themselves, fixed their future fate in life, descended the Pilgrim Hill, in full

view of the *Conca d'Oro*, the Golden Shell, which protects the miniature capital of Sicily, as she lies nestling amid the cactuses and orange trees. They found their elders engrossed in their own conversation, and quite unconscious in their deep pre-occupation that they had been kept waiting at least three quarters of an hour for their giddy companions.

But Mrs. Charles Dayrell looked up as they approached by the rocky pathway, and there was something in their mien and attitude which quite involuntarily brought to her recollection certain lines of Tennyson, the musical rhythm of which had once caught her fancy :

‘And on her lover’s arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old ;
And o’er the hills and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro’ all the world she followed him.’

Perhaps something in the scene around helped

to cause the association, but so it was that she turned to Lord Kendal, and with a guilty air said,

‘My dear John, what have we been about?’

John, who had returned to his letters, looked up startled into his sister-in-law’s face, and from thence glanced at the culprits, and finally demanded of the latter,

‘Children, where have you been? Come, it is time to go back.’

Nothing more was said. Amy was lifted on her donkey, and in absolute silence the whole party retraced their steps to Trinacria.

But that evening a little white-robed figure was clinging round Lord Kendal’s neck, imploring, coaxing, persuading, till the indulgent father was fain to promise that he would see the young lover before they quitted Palermo, and give him a hearing.

Two days later a boy was standing on the little pier, watching with straining eyes a

slender figure leaning over the bulwarks of the Naples steamer as she went puffing out towards the bay ; the former personage thinking himself in Paradise because a positive veto had not been at once put upon his suit ; the latter quite determined that papa should know that they were not ‘ children,’ as he seemed to think, but grown-up people who knew perfectly their own minds.





CHAPTER XII.

THE ACCIDENT.

GERTRUDE continued far from well. She lost strength and appetite, and she soon began to be aware that her father was watching her with anxious looks, and he surprised her by asking her one afternoon if she felt ill. Gertrude was so unaccustomed to think of herself or her sensations, and so afraid of exciting remark, that she hastily answered,

‘Oh, no, papa, thank you.’ And as he still continued to gaze earnestly into her face, she added, ‘Has anybody been telling you I am not well? Lizzie Burns, perhaps?’

‘Come and sit under the great tree with me for a bit, Gerty,’ he answered.

They went out to the great spreading oak on

the pretty lawn. Gerty thought of the day when her gossamer cousin Amy had sped across the lawn to meet her, and her gentle mother had stood in the door-window of her room, watching the meeting. She looked round : Reginald was digging vigorously in his small garden, talking volubly to John Daniels the while ; Jane was holding a tottering creature by the skirt of his frock, as he endeavoured to gather the daisies. But her thoughts soon wandered from these present scenes to the boy cousin far away, fighting his country's battles amid such deadly peril.

Arthur Dayrell watched her in silence for some minutes, then said,

‘ My child, do you know that Mr. Marchmont has left England ? ’

‘ I think I heard William say so, papa, though Lizzie thought he was going to take on the Red House. ’

‘ Is it true, Gerty, that you have refused him ? ’

‘Yes, papa,’ said Gertrude, blushing violently.

‘Why, my child? Is it because you do not care about him, or are there other reasons?’

‘Oh, papa!’ Gertrude laid her head suddenly on his shoulder.

‘Look up, my dear, and tell me candidly. Is it that my Gerty would not leave her old father?’

Gertrude raised her head, then suddenly flinging her arms round her father’s neck, kissed him passionately, and said,

‘Papa, let me tell you everything now. I did not like to talk to you before—to tease you with my worries. Was it wrong, papa?’

‘No, my child, not wrong, but a reproach to me, for I feel that I have been selfish in my grief, and——’

But Gertrude could not let him go on.

‘No, no, dear, dear papa, you must not say that; but you don’t know how I have longed for—for——Well, papa, now I will tell you.’

And thereupon Gertrude poured it all out—

Christian Marchmont's proposal and her reply, Charley's departure, his strange farewell; and at last, with many pauses and many blushes, she avowed her conviction that Charley loved her, and her discovery that she had never cared for anybody but him.

'And it was my doing! I sent him away, papa! Oh, what is to be done?'

And she burst into a flood of irrepressible tears. Her father, who, to tell the truth, had heard a good deal of this that very morning from Sebastian, soothed her as tenderly as a mother could have done. And Gertrude felt so relieved by this conversation with her kind and loving parent, that she was soon able to dry her tears and to listen to his comforting prognostications, and to remember that, after all, Charles Dayrell was engaged in the performance of his duty.

Though she was hardly aware how much she had suffered in every way from watching with-

out being able to alleviate her father's great sorrow, and how that sorrow had almost created a bar between them which might have been difficult to remove, she was conscious that it was the greatest relief to be again able to talk to him as freely as before, and, engrossing though the subject of Charley was, she could not resist alluding to her other great anxiety—her brother Reginald.

But her father stopped her.

‘Not now, darling,’ he said; ‘don’t worry your poor head about the little fellow now. Seb and I have been talking over some plans for him; and now I must have you go and lie down: you don’t look fit for anything—your head aches very much, doesn’t it?’

Now that Arthur Dayrell was roused about his Gerty, it seemed as if he could not do too much for her. Gertrude’s head had been aching very much in the morning, and though she had forgotten the pain in the exciting conversation

that had just taken place, it now returned with double violence, as if a miniature blacksmith were working a little sledge-hammer inside her head, or varying his operations by fastening an iron ring tight round it. Almost dizzy with this throbbing pain, she retired to her bed-room, drew down all the blinds to shut out the western sun, and lay down on the bed, her hands clasped over her forehead. But this gave her no relief, and she was obliged to get up and walk up and down the room, to try and still the throbbings of this troublesome sledge-hammer. At length the crisis of the pain came, and then Gertrude, lying down once more, fell asleep. Gerty was rather subject to these intense headaches, and when at last she fell into one of these sleeps, it would generally be a slumber so profound, from the exhaustion caused by pain, that, if undisturbed, she would wake at the end of a couple of hours perfectly bewildered as to where she was or whether it was night or morning; but

the headache was gone, and the relief from pain most delightful.

On this occasion she was destined to have a ruder awakening. A loud scream from the adjacent nursery first startled her from her slumbers, and then a kind of smothered gasp, followed by a dead silence. The scream seemed to be from Jane, little Eustace's nurse; and Gertrude sat up for a moment to collect her senses and remember where she was, and then a thought rushed into her mind, 'Something has happened to the baby!' She jumped off her bed, and had just opened her door, when the nursery bell rang violently, and without losing another moment, Gertrude hastened thither. There in the low chair sat Jane, the baby boy lying in her lap, pale as death and motionless; Reginald crouched in a corner of the room, hardly less pale, but still defiant-looking; while Jane, like a fool as she was, gasped out without a moment's warning,

‘Oh, Miss Dayrell! send for the doctor! Master Reginald has killed his little brother!’

‘What are you saying, Jane?’ cried the horror-stricken Gertrude; ‘give him to me.’

She almost snatched her treasure from the arms of the frightened nurse, and then turning to her, said,

‘Run down quick, and tell Sam to go for Dr. Mackenzie instantly.’

Jane dashed out of the room, and Reginald came up now, and said in a low voice,

‘I did not push him so very hard.’

‘I can’t listen to you now, Reginald: go away.’

And his sister’s set agonized face had such an effect upon the child that he drew back without another word. But here the door burst open, and William came in.

‘What’s all this?’ he said in an angry manner, meant to carry off his fright and anxiety. ‘I met that idiot Jane on the stairs. Here’s

Dr. Mackenzie coming through the gate. What has happened to the child?—Ha! who did this?’

‘I did,’ said a child’s voice, ‘but I did not mean to kill him.’

William stood for a moment speechless with consternation, then exclaimed in a hoarse voice,

‘Gertrude, this is your doing. I told you if they excited the boy’s jealousy that it would come to this. Give me the child.’

In justice to William be it said, that his own terror, not unmingled with self-reproach, made him blind to the effect such cruel words must produce on his poor sister. All this time she never spoke, and the next moment the doctor, who fortunately had been passing the garden gate just as Sam dashed out of it to fetch him, entered the room. He saw at once the state of the case, and putting aside the frightened maids who had now crowded in, he took the little fellow from William’s arms (the first time he had ever lain there so placidly) and listened

whether there was yet pulsation in the heart. He looked up relieved.

‘He lives,’ he said, ‘but his life hangs on a slender thread. Out of the room, all of you but the nurse.’ And as Jane stepped forward, choking down her sobs, he added, ‘Take off his clothes and put him to bed instantly. Come, Miss Gertrude, don’t despair,’ he said, turning to her.

But he spoke to unheeding ears. Gertrude, overpowered by all that had happened, and already ill, had given way utterly, and was now as insensible as her little brother.

Then William’s heart smote him.

‘I will carry her to her room, doctor,’ he said, ‘and call her maid, while you attend to this little fellow. It is the shock that has upset her : she’ll be better soon.’

‘Do so, and I will come to her as soon as I have done what I can here.’



CHAPTER XIII.

HOME.

ARTHUR DAYRELL and Sebastian, who had returned home for good the day before, came in about an hour later, having been together to an outlying part of the parish, and a long and interesting conversation took place between them. Sebastian told his father all that had passed between him and his sister, and expressed his firm opinion that Charley would never marry any one but Gertrude. As for Amy, even if Charley had cared for her, which he never did, she had no liking for him beyond a cousinly regard ; indeed, Sebastian knew that Sir Roswal Lismore had followed Lord Kendal abroad, and he had very

little doubt what his feelings towards Lady Amabel Dayrell were.

‘I am very sorry for this,’ mused Arthur. ‘John will never consent to that marriage, in spite of his very great indulgence to that wilful little girl.’

‘It was William who was telling me the other day that he heard from a brother officer of his that Sir Roswal had been with them boating on the lake at Como, and Uncle John apparently unconscious that anything might be going on.’

‘There was something taking about the boy, certainly,’ said Arthur. ‘Nobody could help loving him who came across him. The young Philammon — that was your name for him, I think, Seb?’

‘But if he loves Amy, it is not a Hypatia on whom he has set his affections. She is much more like the Pelagia of the story. Gerty is more my idea of the grand and stately Hypatia.’

‘Poor Gerty! How will it all end?’ said

Arthur. 'I wish that boy would come home ; but he seems to have been quite a hero — even William envies him.'

The father and son walked up to the garden gate in the twilight, and were rather surprised to see William looking out for them. He was to return to his duty in a few days, having had an unusually long leave of absence ; but as they approached him there was something in the expression of his countenance which caused Sebastian to say hastily,

'What is wrong, William ? Has anything happened ?'

'There has been an accident,' said William bluntly : 'the baby is hurt.'

'An accident !' said Arthur ; 'what sort of accident ? But I will go up to him directly.'

'One moment, father. Dr. Mackenzie is here.'

'Good heavens ! William, you alarm me ! Tell me at once what it is.'

'The baby has had a blow, father ; and Gerty,

I fear, has been upset by the fright. You will find the doctor in your study, sir ; he is waiting for you.'

And as Arthur, extremely alarmed, hastened in, William took his brother's arm, and drawing him into the garden, said,

'It is a baddish business, I am afraid.'

'How did it happen, William ? Tell me quick, and then I'll go to Gertrude. Is she much frightened, poor child ?'

'I can't make head or tail of it,' answered William. 'Reginald, it seems, has given the baby a blow or a push, which knocked him off the chest of drawers on his head, and there's concussion of the brain, I am afraid. I have been questioning Redgie, but I can't get much out of him.'

'But how in the name of wonder did the child ever come on the top of the chest of drawers ? What was Jane about ?' interrupted Sebastian.

‘Careless woman!—yes, that is what I want to know,’ said William fiercely. ‘I’ll be bound it was more her fault than the poor boy’s, though he did accuse himself; but I can’t question the woman now, and, as I told you, I can get nothing more from Redgie.’

‘It was an accident, then, I hope,’ said Sebastian, breathing more freely as he remembered Reginald’s animosity to the baby.

William did not answer.

‘Poor little fellow!’ added Seb. ‘How distressed Gerty must be. I’ll go to her, William. Where is she—in the nursery?’

‘No,’ said William, abruptly, ‘she is in bed. I am afraid the shock was too much for her. In fact,’ he said, hesitating, ‘I am afraid I frightened her, for I thought the child was killed, and I as good as told her it was her fault; and it is,’ added he, doggedly, ‘it is all her fault, and that foolish nurse’s, for making the boy so jealous.’

‘ Oh, William!’ said Sebastian, reproachfully, ‘ how could you speak in that manner to Gertrude? How cruel! And she has been so unwell and anxious lately! No, you must not stop me, I must go to her.’

And Sebastian broke away from his elder brother, to whom he had never said anything so severe in his life before. William paced moodily up and down the garden, and for the first time wondered—if he had been more tender, more sympathizing with his sister, instead of being so exacting, so harsh and unbending with her—if he had helped her instead of baffling her efforts with Reginald—whether, perhaps, this catastrophe might not have been averted? These thoughts formed a sort of accompaniment to the audible murmurs he uttered about Sebastian spoiling his sister, and what nonsense it was. But his naturally good heart was touched in spite of himself, and he began to suspect that, perhaps, it was a pity to assume in his daily

manner a roughness and hardness which he did not in reality feel.

Meanwhile Sebastian stole gently to his sister's room, and entered noiselessly. His father and the doctor were both there, but Dr. Mackenzie came up to him and led him outside.

'Your sister is very ill, Mr. Sebastian: she has had a great mental shock. The little one, too, is in a precarious state, and your poor father is much overcome. So you must be head, and think for him. Tell me now at once, is there any friend of Miss Gertrude's who would come over and take care of her, do ye think, or should I get you a nurse now?'

Sebastian thought an instant.

'There's Mrs. Burns: I wonder if she could be spared for a few days? Gertrude is very fond of her, poor darling.'

'There, there, Mr. Sebastian, don't give way. There's plenty of hope; but the poor child is in a high fever just now, and knows no one.

She has not been well these last months, Mr. Sebastian ; ever since your poor mother died she has had a deal of trouble, and this shock brought out the illness. Keep up heart now, and do ye or Mr. William just go over to Mrs. Burns, and get her to come and see to Miss Gerty. I am going to stop here the night, for my other little patient requires watching.'

In truth, troubles had fallen thick and fast on the Dayrells, and for many weeks that little household at the rectory was the scene of deep anxiety. Lizzie Burns—kind little woman!—sent for her unmarried sister to take care of the bairns and look after Davie while she hastened on her work of charity ; and, 'my word !' as she would have said herself, did not our sister Charlotte make a revolution in that household ! Did not she point-blank decline to make Davie any of those messes with which he was wont to fritter away his health on vigils and fast-days !

'No,' said Charlotte ; 'if Davie wished to

fast, well and good ; she had no wish to prevent him ; he need not eat anything at all ' — that *was* fasting she considered—' but the children should have their good wholesome food every day.'

And Davie was obliged to submit to Charlotte's despotic rule, and either eat what she provided or go without ; for Charlotte was cast in another mould from his gentle Lizzie, being ten years older, and an utter enemy to what she was pleased to call ' fantastical nonsense.'

Davie had grown a stone heavier, when, much to his relief, Lizzie returned home. But this is anticipating.

Gertrude's illness became low fever, with constant delirium. No one but her father and Mrs. Burns saw her, and occasionally Sebastian. She lay there day after day knowing no one, but fancying herself now in India, now with her cousin Amy, now calling anxiously to Charley to come and help her in some fancied danger,

and often piteously crying out, 'Oh, William, don't be unkind!'

Sebastian took the entire charge of Reginald during these melancholy days. At his father's request he talked to Redgie long and seriously, drew from him by degrees all the feelings which had been rankling in his mind for so long, and having at length penetrated his extraordinarily reserved nature, he showed him gently how he had been nourishing the feelings of Cain in his childish breast; and when he drew a picture of Gertrude's anguish, her illness, and the additional grief he had himself occasioned his papa when he was already so unhappy, Reginald's pride gave way entirely, and Sebastian saw with pleasure the first genuine tears he had ever seen the child shed. From this moment, spite of the disparity of age, a strong friendship sprang up between these two brothers. Sebastian, who undertook nearly all his father's parish duties during this time, took the little fellow every-

where with him, besides teaching him all his lessons ; and Reginald showed himself anything but a stupid boy, now that he found himself under the stricter discipline of masculine government. Sebastian found him an intelligent companion, proud to follow him everywhere like a little dog, and obey all his behests.

William was obliged to depart while still very anxious about his sister ; but at length the crisis came, the fever and delirium ceased, and though the weakness was very great, Gertrude could open her eyes and smile quite in her old fond way on her dear father, who was sitting by her bed-side. Papa could only manage to kiss her fondly, but his heart was too full of joy to speak. In a day or two Gerty found her voice, but she was fearfully weak.

‘I can’t remember anything,’ she said ; ‘but I fancy I have seen Lizzie sometimes, and latterly even dear Aunt Alice ; but that can’t be.’

‘Not so impossible, darling,’ said her father :
‘your aunt is returned.’

Gertrude seemed too weak even to show surprise.

‘I am so glad,’ she murmured. ‘And Lizzie Burns, too—was it she?’

‘Yes, my child ; but she is gone back to her bairnies, and Aunt Alice is here instead. Are you strong enough to see her?’

‘Oh, yes, papa : I am nearly well, I think ; but I can’t remember much. I have been ill a long time, I suppose?’

‘Don’t try and remember now, darling ; time enough for that. And here’s your aunt.’

Silently these two embraced, and then Gertrude lay back with a calm air of perfect content, as she looked at the sweet, noble features of the relative whom she had always loved, but who now seemed doubly dear, as the mother of that Charley who loved her so well.

‘Dear auntie,’ she said, as she lay with her

hand in Mrs. Dayrell's, 'you are come back to me, and I have so much to say to you; but my head is very dizzy still.'

'Shall I try and make things a little clear to you, dearest? or shall I tire you? and can you wait a little longer?'

'No. I am much better, and I get so tired, thinking and thinking: do talk to me, and tell me what are dreams and what is real, for since I have been ill everything seems mixed up. Is anybody here?' she said, looking round, and seeing that they were alone together, she added, in a low voice, 'There is one bad dream I have had, about baby; it has haunted me all the time. I thought he was dead, and lying in his coffin. Is it only a dream?' she continued, looking very wistfully into her aunt's face.

'It was indeed only a dream, my child,' said Mrs. Dayrell, cheerfully, who had, of course, heard all the particulars of the past events, and who was desirous that Gerty should only learn

the facts by degrees ; and as Gertrude still looked anxiously at her, she said, 'I wonder if you would like to see him for one moment?'

'Oh, yes,' said Gertrude, 'indeed I should.'

And Aunt Alice, who had been prepared for this, stepped to the door softly, and called to some one outside. Then she re-entered, bearing in her arms a fair curly-headed boy of about fifteen months old. She carried him to Gertrude's bed, and the little fellow looked at the invalid for a moment with a frown of childish perplexity and alarm, but as she smiled at him, a bright smile of love, the baby memory seemed to come back. He had often been carried into that room of a morning, to roll on 'sister's' bed and wake her with kisses, and he suddenly stretched out his arms to be placed there now. His aunt, being taken by surprise, was obliged to yield to the little fellow's impulsive movement, and the next moment he was sprawling on the invalid's couch, shouting with satisfaction, and trying to

open 'sister's' eyes with his little fingers. It was like old times to him, if to no one else, and Aunt Alice saw what had happened. The sight of him had brought back the accident and all the circumstances to Gertrude's memory, and she had fainted. Eustace was hastily carried away, and though Gertrude soon revived under the remedies applied, she was not allowed to talk any more, and it was even thought best that her aunt should not see her again that day.

But the following morning her restless anxiety to see her aunt again was so great that Dr. Mackenzie said it would be better to indulge her; and Mrs. Dayrell came into the room as soon as Gertrude was laid upon her couch—for she was allowed to get up now for a few hours in the middle of the day. Happy now about her baby brother's well-doing, Gertrude had insisted upon seeing little Reginald, who came in with a very subdued air, but seemed very glad to see 'sister' again, and brought her some flowers from his

own garden, an attention which pleased her very much. But as soon as her aunt came, she begged that they might be left alone together, and she then said to her,

‘Oh, auntie, I have longed for you so much! and then, what you must have gone through! I think sometimes you and Uncle John must hate me.’

‘My poor child,’ said her aunt, tenderly, ‘I fear you have gone through a great deal; for, from what I hear, this illness has been coming on for some time.’

‘I have had no one to talk to,’ said Gertrude: ‘poor papa was so unhappy, I could not worry him; and there were so many little things—Reginald and the household—and I was so ignorant; and then Charley’s sad face the last time I saw him kept haunting me, and—Oh, auntie, say it was not my doing, sending him away! say it was my fancy that he cared for me!’

‘Be comforted, my child,’ said her aunt,

soothingly. 'You have suffered much, I see ; but Charley is still, thank God, safe and well. Your uncle John knows now of his affection for you, my Gerty, and has a shrewd guess that it is not unrequited. He has been already to the Horse Guards, and there is every probability of Charley returning home on promotion. We are all most proud of our young hero, and you must make haste and get well, that you may be here to greet him. Why, Gerty, he has won the Victoria Cross,' added the proud mother.

'Dear Uncle John !' murmured Gertrude, 'how good he is ! how I long to see him ! How is he, auntie ?'

'Not very well, my love : his foreign travels have done but little for him, and Amy causes him much anxiety.'

'What, Amoretta ?' said Gertrude.

'Yes ; she has made up her wilful mind to marry Sir Roswal Lismore, and her poor father finds it hopeless to oppose her. I am afraid

we have both helped to spoil her, poor little thing.'

And Aunt Alice, who had done her best to spoil every one who came near her from time immemorial, sighed over her shortcomings. Gertrude sighed too, but for a different reason. She knew how much William was attached to Amoretta, and was grieved for his disappointment.

But papa now came to put an end to the interview, which had been quite long enough for Gertrude's strength; and after an affectionate parting with Charley's mother, she lay for the next few hours in a quiet trance of happiness, and dreamed of Charley.

Gertrude from this day made rapid strides to health, and Sebastian proved a most invaluable nurse; cheerful and gentle, he was just the person for a convalescent. He let out a remarkable fact too one day, viz., that Mr. Marchmont was gone to India. He had heard that some relatives of his had perished in the mutiny, leav-

ing an orphan child, and had resolved to go out to Calcutta, and learn something, if possible, of the fate of the little one. Gertrude blushed at the sound of Christian's name, but said no more about him.

It was now, for the first time, that she heard the full particulars of little Eustace's accident. When Jane's back was turned, Reginald, who had taken it into his head to play at what he called 'shipwrecked mariners,' had hauled his brother up by help of chair and table to the top of the chest of drawers, intended to represent a rock in mid ocean ; from this perilous elevation, half in passion half by accident, he had pushed him off because the baby had resisted his efforts to make him sit still. During the time that the child was in danger and Gertrude so ill, Redgie was overwhelmed with remorse, and both his father and Sebastian had seized the opportunity to infuse kinder feelings in his breast towards the baby brother. It was found that Jane's in-

judicious behaviour had fostered his dislike, and accordingly it was ruled that she had better go, and the faithful Newman, who had nursed them all from William downwards, and had left them a few years previously to go into business, and who, it was ascertained, was anxious to return to service, was delighted to come back and take charge of a new baby. Doating as she did on her former nursling, 'Master Reginald,' she pursued a totally different system with the two children from that of her predecessor. Taking for granted that Redgie loved the baby, she always treated it as a great favour if he condescended to watch him for five minutes or to visit him in the nursery, and finding himself thereby of importance, Redgie gradually spent all his play-time there, and now found out for the first time that Eustace admired him more than any person in the house. Instead of being perpetually greeted with, 'Take care, Master Reginald! don't hurt the baby!' from the injudicious Jane, it was

more often, 'Master Eustace has been on the watch for you, sir. See how pleased he is.'

Newman understood the state of the case, and used every effort to make the elder boy look upon the younger as a *protégé* instead of a rival. It was a great surprise and happiness to Gertrude when one day Redgie led the little one, staggering along on his fat sturdy legs, into her room, saying in a would-be gruff voice, in imitation of William, 'Come, hold up, young 'un !' the small thing chuckling with satisfaction ; and when Gertrude a little later saw Eustace handling one of Reginald's most precious possessions, in imminent danger of breaking the same, and she, trembling for the new friendship, would have rescued the valuable from his baby hands, Redgie resented the act with as strong indignation as if it had been a personal outrage.

'Baby's *not* going to hurt it, sister,' he cried, 'and I don't mind if he does. Here, darling.'

And Gertrude would have kissed him on the

spot for this interference with her authority, if such a proceeding would not have been a dire offence to the undemonstrative Redgie.

As soon as Gertrude was well enough to see visitors, Lord Kendal and Amy came to see her. She was shocked to see the alteration in her uncle, he looked ill and aged, and she was pained also to see how little Amy seemed to be aware that there was any cause for anxiety. Indeed, that young lady was more flighty than ever, and when, after a few loving words to Gerty, Uncle John left them together while he sought his brother, Amy's whole conversation was upon Sir Roswal Lismore. Gertrude was rather glad she did not call him Angel—that name belonged to the ideal portion of his life—and somehow she could not fancy the beautiful innocent youth with the great serious eyes, that seemed made for heavenly musings, engaged in anything so commonplace as making love to her volatile, truly soulless little cousin, Amabel Dayrell.

In vain Gertrude endeavoured to engage her cousin in anything like serious conversation on the subject.

‘But think of the difference of religion, dear Amy. Do you forget that he is a Roman Catholic?’

‘Why, Gerty, I never knew you were so bigoted as to think a Roman Catholic cannot be saved.’

‘Now Amy, when did I ever imply such a thing? Do talk reasonably. I meant, could you bear to think that you could have no real intercourse with your husband on the most important subject of all? You could never go to church together——’

‘Oh, as to that,’ interrupted Amy, ‘I could always have the brougham to go to All Saints, and sometimes Roswal will take me to Farm Street, to hear the music. It is *so* lovely, Gerty.’

Gertrude saw it was a hopeless case, and gave up the point; and Amy, who considered that

she had triumphed completely in the argument, and had always been very open with her cousin, now rattled on about Sir Roswal's charms, and made it pretty evident that she had led on this very unworldly boy into a strong and deep attachment to her.

It was not an engagement, Gertrude at length elicited from her, but if they continued in the same mind for a year, then it was to be permitted.

Gertrude told her cousin plainly her opinion, that she hoped it would never be, and that she wished that Amy should have a husband to whom she could look up for guidance and counsel, instead of this young Philammon, who knew no more of the world and its ways than if, like his prototype, he had been brought up in the desert of the Laura. But Gerty might just as well have talked to her own kitten as to Amoretta, and she could only sigh over the probable future of these young things, and hold her peace.

But day after day now went smoothly by, and Gerty was able to go in the pony carriage with Amoretta, and see kind Lizzie Burns, and thank her from her heart for her nursing and care; and each letter from Charley seemed to bring health to her cheek and joy to her heart, when one day Amabel came flying into the room with a face of some dismay.

‘What now, Amy?’ said Gertrude, as her cousin threw her arms round her; ‘what is it?’

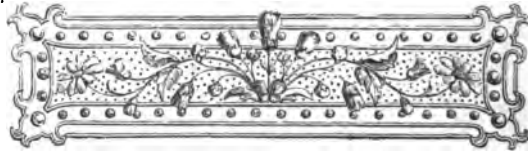
‘There has been a letter from Charley, Gertrude, by private hand, with lots of messages for you in it, but—he is slightly wounded. Now don’t look so scared, for he writes himself, and says it is quite trifling; and altogether it is rather good news, for now he is sure to come home.’

Gertrude drew a deep breath. That word *wounded* had a terrible sound; but when she read the boy’s letter, it was so joyous, so happy, so full of loving messages to Cousin Gerty, that her cheek was aflame, and her heart leaped to

read them, while yet she shuddered at the thought of the danger her young soldier had escaped.

She looked at the date: it was written from the Hills, whither he had been sent in pursuit of a body of the rebels, and the writer mentioned especially how he had insisted on his name not being in the telegram, as his hurt was so trifling, in order that his family might not be alarmed. There was a postscript at the end which made her exclaim,

‘Oh, Amy! did you see this? Charley is coming home directly, coming with despatches as soon as this business is over. He says he may be home soon after his letter arrives. Oh, Amy!’” And Gerty, throwing her arms round Amoretta’s neck, burst into tears.



CHAPTER XIV.

NEVER—FOR EVER.

YES; while those who loved him so dearly were talking with such fond yearnings of their boy's return home, Charley Dayrell was indeed fast approaching a far different home; while they thought of his passage over the stormy Indian Ocean, he was traversing a more awful sea; and how soon did the haven appear in sight! For Charley Dayrell, life's short pilgrimage was ended, and the true home, one not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, was ready for him.

Charley lay on a light iron bed in an airy room belonging to the house of one of the residents far up among the Hills, his slight frame worn to a shadow, and so altered that few could

have known him. That wound, of which he had made so light, was only partly responsible for the mischief; illness had for some time past preyed upon his constitution, unnoticed, or bravely battled with, till at length the system gave way altogether, and they were compelled to leave him behind in a village in one of the hill districts, where there were English residents and an English church. There he was most kindly received, and every comfort that could be procured lavished upon him.

Thus he lay that cool evening, for the heats were less powerful now, while by his side sat a reddish-haired, kindly-looking man, whom we have met before. It was Christian Marchmont, who, coming to India on business of his own, had made his way to head-quarters, and from thence to the village where he heard that his young rival lay sick and helpless; and here he had at once devoted himself to his service with all the energy of his warm, honest heart. Charley was

looking very happy: the wearing pain in his side had subsided; he was certainly better this evening, it was thought; and Dr. Ashe, Christian's friend and fellow-traveller, shared in this opinion. They were now conversing, and Charley was saying,

‘It is a good thing for me, Christian, that business brought you to this part of the world; but I am afraid you have been unsuccessful in your inquiries.’

‘Unhappily, no,’ said Christian Marchmont. ‘There is no doubt that my young relative, with her husband and boy, perished in the dreadful privations at Lucknow. Poor little Rose! I have her young husband's journal here. I never read such a touching record as the history of their courtship on board the ship which brought them out; with its touches of droll humour, too.’

‘They were happy, Christian, in dying together,’ said Charley, quietly: ‘it is the only thing

that weighs on me, sometimes, of how they will grieve at home.'

'My dear fellow, surely you are better to-night?' said Marchmont, earnestly. 'Ashe is sure of it.'

Charley shook his head, but said nothing for a few minutes. Then he said,

'Do you believe that there will be work for us to do yonder?'

'Work?' said Christian, inquiringly.

'Yes, work; something to be done for Him who died for us. There will be—there must be.'

'I have never thought much of these things,' said Marchmont: 'don't ask *me*; but I should like to hear what you think, dear old fellow.'

'Then, dear Marchmont, think of them now. Don't put it off: it will all seem so strange to you when you get there if you have never prepared for it in any way. You know, Christian, I don't believe that I shall get well, but I am rather better to-night, so I shall tell you all I

wish in case of the worst, and I feel as if I could write home. Help me into the next room, like a good fellow, and give me the writing things.'

Christian complied, and Charley quietly wrote his letters, occasionally pausing to talk to his attentive nurse, who watched him with a strange interest and ever-growing affection.

Christian spoke truly when he said he had never thought of heavenly things or the world beyond the grave. He knew the principles of religion, but it was head-knowledge only; and now as he watched this boy, younger than himself, standing apparently on the brink of the unseen world, and saw his living faith in the things unseen, as he saw how real to him were all these, he said to himself,

'What is it that can do this? Tell me, Charles,' he said, 'for I want to know,' after Charley had given him some directions about his effects, 'tell me, can you bear to think of death?'

'Oh, yes,' said Charley; 'why not?'

‘Why not! Are you not leaving everything behind—happy prospects, bright hopes, all those who love you?’

‘Yes,’ said Charley, as he laid down his pen and leaned his head on his transparent hand, ‘but my dear ones will follow me there, and for the rest, they seem very trifling and insignificant now.’

‘I could not—no, I *could* not,’ said Christian, whose foreign blood made him less reserved than a purely English youth would have been under such circumstances. ‘And,’ he added, ‘before you, all so dark, so unknown!’

‘Not dark where He is, friend,’ said Charley. ‘I will walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death fearlessly, Christian, for I know He will be there. I could almost fancy sometimes that I am Hopeful, and you Christian, only you do not encourage me as you ought; you rather wish to see me faint-hearted,’ he added, with his peculiar pensive smile, which seemed to irradiate his whole

countenance. 'How one goes back to that old allegory,' he said; 'it has cheered many a dying bed besides mine, I dare say;—the Everlasting Hills, and the Land of Beulah.' Then he added, 'Jerusalem the Golden.'

He sank into a reverie. Christian watched him in silence, and thought he had never seen anything so beautiful as that young face, with the rapt earnest gaze that seemed to see so far, so very far off.

All of a sudden an ashy paleness came over his face, and he put his hand upon his side. Christian sprang to him.

'What is it?' he said, anxiously.

'A sudden pain,' gasped Charley. 'I will go back to bed, please.'

Christian, much alarmed, carefully assisted his weak steps, when all of a sudden Charley stopped. The door of his bed-room was open, and Christian, following the direction of his eyes, looked towards the doorway. He saw no one,

but he was startled by the expression that suddenly illumined Charley's countenance. There was a look of intense happiness, as of one who hears good tidings, and then Charley turned to him, and said,

‘It will not be long now, Christian.’

Christian placed him in bed, and flew for Dr. Ashe.

‘The abcess has broken internally,’ said the latter gravely, as he came out of Charley's room a quarter of an hour later, ‘and he has not many hours to live.’

‘I knew it,’ said Charley, as Christian knelt by his side; ‘*they* told me so. I am quite ready. You will tell them at home all about it,’ he added presently, ‘all of them,—Uncle John, kinder than the best of fathers to me, and my mother, and poor Gertrude. Christian, come nearer, for I can't see you well, and I must say one thing. Gerty loves me, I know, and will mourn deeply for a while, but time will

heal the wound, I hope and feel; and then, Christian, if your feelings are still the same for her, tell her that it was my last wish that she should make you happy, and requite you thus for what you have done for me.'

These were his last conscious words. He sank into a sort of stupor soon after. Christian and Dr. Ashe watched him through the night: he spoke occasionally, but he evidently fancied himself far away. 'Going to church with Aunt Lily,' he said once, 'and the scent of the hay-field near the rectory was so delicious,' he murmured; and Gertrude's name once passed his lips; but his last words were, 'Mother, darling mother!' And Charley Dayrell passed away into everlasting rest.

Later on that morning the village was alive with military sounds, as Sir Archibald Menteith arrived, on his return from the duty on which he had been engaged, and in which he had been

successful; and springing from his dust-covered but unwearied little Arab, he called out to Dr. Ashe, who came to the door,

‘How’s the lad, doctor?’

Dr. Ashe shook his head, and the old general knew that all was over. He at once went up to the room where Charley lay, his young face fixed in that expression of calm, ineffable repose, which is so inexpressibly thrilling and awing to the beholder.

A figure, with bowed head and folded arms, sat at the foot of the couch. Silently they gazed for the last time on all that was mortal of Charles Dayrell, and then Christian bent down, and kissing the cold forehead, said,

‘Farewell, till we all meet again.’

They buried him with military honours in the little churchyard of that church amongst the glorious mountains: it was such a spot as that in which they laid, but a short time ago, the remains of one who had been a good and

faithful servant to his country in many regions of the world, and who had freely spent his life for her, and had yielded it up without a murmur when the great summons came, though it seemed that there were yet many years of usefulness before him. He sleeps far away from his Scottish home, but by those who have partaken of Lord Elgin's hospitality or shared his friendship, whether in England or in Canada, in Jamaica or in China, his name will ever be remembered with grateful affection.

It was a fine autumn morning at Derley Rectory. Mrs. Newman was coming along the little front hall towards the morning-room, that room which had been Lilian Dayrell's, and where Gertrude always sat of a morning and transacted her business. Newman suddenly stopped, however, for she saw, or thought she saw, a young gentleman come in at the hall door (which stood open, as it usually did of a

fine morning), and pass on towards the morning-room. The person, whoever it was, seemed to wear a uniform of a dark blue colour, and Newman's heart made quite a bound as she recognized 'Master Charles'! 'She stood for a moment perplexed, but she heard no exclamation from Gertrude, so she turned into the drawing-room, which, as it happened, opened into the morning-room, of which the door of communication stood open. Newman could see quite into the room. Gertrude was sitting at the table, Reginald at her side, reading to her, the baby boy on the floor, close to her, surrounded by toys, and playing with the large Persian cat. Bending over him was another figure, the same she had just seen, while Gertrude seemed totally unconscious of its presence. Looking up, she saw Newman standing in the doorway.

'Come in, Newman,' she said, observing the hesitation and perplexity in the old woman's face. 'There is no one here, if you want me.'

Newman looked round. No, there was no one but her young mistress and the two children! She rubbed her eyes, and then said,

‘I beg your pardon, Miss Gertrude, I think I must be dreaming, but I thought I saw a gentleman come in.’

‘No,’ said Gertrude, her eyes opening rather wide, for she was struck by Newman’s manner; ‘no one has been here. Who did you think it was? Sebastian is gone out with papa.’

‘Well, Miss Gertrude, to tell you the truth, I thought I saw Mr. Charles, and fancied he might have returned sudden like. It was thinking of him and expecting him, I suppose, dear young gentleman, and being so used to see him here in your dear mamma’s time, that made me think I saw him. It quite threw my heart into my mouth for the minute.’

‘It is very odd,’ said Gertrude, and a strange feeling thrilled through her as she spoke. ‘Did you notice how he was dressed?’

‘Well, Miss Gertrude, it was a dark blue coat with a sort of braid on it; but, you see, it was all a foolish old woman’s fancy.’

Gertrude felt more and more strange. Newman had never seen Charley in this dress, which was evidently his *aide-de-camp’s* uniform, and as the old woman continued to look anxiously at her, she said,

‘It was a strange fancy, Newman. Will you take baby now? and, Redgie, dear, you can go and play till it is time to go to Mr. Chorley.’

The children were dismissed, and Gertrude sat thinking; then she took her journal and noted down all that Newman had told her. But she told no one, not even Sebastian, for many months after.

I have not the heart to dwell upon the grief, the anguish that fell upon that united family when the news of Charley’s death arrived. Those glorious lines, written on one who

was another group assembled on that pretty lawn, but some were absent from it whose names would never be forgotten there. Lord Kendal was sitting under the great oak tree, his widowed, now childless sister-in-law as usual by his side, for those two were never parted now. Resting awhile from his duties was Arthur Dayrell, but little changed outwardly from what he was when we first met him, greyer perhaps, and a little thinner, but the sweet loving expression unchanged, as if sorrow had only purified and ennobled a character so gentle and so unselfish. He was now watching a pair slowly pacing to and fro on the soft green sward, and earnestly conversing. They were his own Gertrude and Christian Marchmont, for it was the eve of Gertrude's wedding-day. Patiently had Christian bided his time, and when the right moment came, he had again pleaded his cause with Gertrude, and had not pleaded in vain.

They were now talking on the topic which to

them both was so full of deep interest, to Gertrude especially of such sweet and tender memories. She heard from him again every detail of those last hours, and for the first time to human ears did Christian acknowledge to his betrothed that his watch beside that death-bed had first wakened him to an interest in spiritual things.

‘For the first time,’ he said, ‘I began to doubt whether we were not living in the land of shadows, and that the only true realities were *there*. No one who looked at that face, and saw the living faith which grew stronger and stronger each moment as the bodily strength decayed, could doubt then that he was passing from death into life. I can never tell you what I felt when I saw that look, when he turned to me and said, “It will be over soon: *they* told me so.” I seemed to have no need to ask who *they* were. I felt that they were the guardian angels of whose constant presence he seemed so certain,

and who were there then to bear his spirit to Paradise.'

'Do you think Newman really saw him?'

said Gertrude in an awed voice.

'I cannot but believe it quite possible, my love. We know so little, so absolutely nothing, of the conditions which govern the world of spirits who, I cannot doubt, are all around us, that we cannot tell how thin the veil may be which separates the material world from it. Charley longed to see you all again—his wish was accomplished, and his presence was felt by the inner consciousness of one present. One day, my Gertrude, we shall understand these mysteries, perhaps; not while we are tied to earth.'

'Have you seen his monument?'

said Gertrude: 'it was done from the latest photographs of him.'

'No,' said Christian; 'I should like to see it.'

They went together to the church, where in the

beautiful chancel lay a recumbent figure sculptured of the purest marble, representing the young soldier in his uniform, a cloak thrown over him. The likeness was most striking: there was the pleasant open brow, the features not very regular, but decided and well cut; but the mouth was the masterpiece for one who had never seen the original, for there was the tender half-smile which Christian had last seen upon those lips when he closed the blue eyes; and the whole expression was so calmly happy, so life-like, that it was difficult to believe that the original was not simply asleep. Beneath it there was an inscription, merely the name,

Charles Reginald Dayrell,

the date, and the name of the Indian village where the beloved remains await the Resurrection Day.

Arthur Dayrell was now his brother's heir, and William, who had once envied Charley's

position, now found himself without an obstacle to the succession which once he had coveted. But William was altered and softened now, and he was so touched by his uncle's kindness to him when he felt like an interloper, that Lord Kendal began to find him a comfort and a support. Indeed, it was soon evident that William was becoming a necessity to him.

Arthur, as a clergyman, had neither the time nor the inclination to undertake the numerous duties which Lord Kendal felt unequal from the state of his health to perform, and William by degrees found himself in the position of the heir-apparent, with plenty of employment and a sphere of usefulness before him. His father and uncle began to hope that he would marry, but at present he appeared to be in no hurry to do this.

Amoretta had had her wilful way and was married to Angel Lismore. But it was very doubtful whether she was happy. Her young

husband, she found out, was too good for this world, a place to which she was exceedingly attached and had no intention of renouncing. He, on the contrary, while loving her dearly, lived the life of an ascetic, was surrounded constantly by priests, and bored her to death. William saw him once, and pronounced him not likely to be long for this world—he had never seen anything so ethereal to be alive.

And Sebastian? He went on his quiet earnest way, a comfort to his father and the kind elder brother to Reginald and Eustace.

The former of these is now at school, and Eustace is to be Aunt Alice's peculiar charge, now that Gertrude relinquishes it. He was thought to resemble her lost Charley, and he is therefore his aunt's consolation and joy.

My story ends here. I shall not linger on the details of the wedding-day, or on the tearful happiness of Lizzie Burns, dear little woman!

as she kissed Gertrude at the door of the rectory and bade her farewell.

Arthur Dayrell had received his darling's last fervent kiss, and had placed her in the carriage by the side of her proud husband, and then, unwilling that the sympathetic villagers round should see his emotion, he turned hastily into the morning-room, and for a few moments gave himself up to all the sad and tender memories which must for ever linger there. As he covered his eyes he seemed again to hear in fancy the sweet cheerful tones of his lost Lilian, to see her sitting in the accustomed chair, or to hear Charley's boyish shout as he had been wont to spring through the open window to greet Aunt Lily or ask for Cousin Gertrude. It was all so vivid that Arthur felt as if awakened from some happy dream, when a childish voice said in his ear,

‘Please, papa, may me go with Seb and Redgie to see the—the—’

‘Fireworks?’ put in another voice. ‘Auntie wants us to come to the Court.’

Two bright faces looked up half perplexed into his,—a curly-headed, blue-eyed boy, in snow-white tunic and great blue sash—a copy in feature and expression of the miniature which never leaves Aunt Alice’s wrist, for day and night she wears the bracelet which contains that loved portrait, Charley Dayrell, her lost son—and a slender brown-eyed boy, thoughtful and grave beyond his years, but casting continually a glance of protecting care on the little one who clings to his hand. There is no need now to exhort Reginald to be kind to his brother Eustace.

Arthur kissed them both fondly, willingly according the desired permission, and, as Sebastian lingered behind them, he stood up, and putting his hand affectionately on his shoulder, he said,

“Truly goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell

in the house of the Lord for ever." Leave me now, dear boy. I will remain here alone for a while. God bless you, best of sons.'



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